

POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS :
THE STATE OF THE ART

Suchitra Dutta

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Political Assassinations – The State of the Art

Submitted by

Suchitra Dutta

For the degree of Ph.D., University of St Andrews

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to research the phenomenon of political assassinations. Political assassinations are not random acts of folly which defy analysis but are well planned and discriminate acts of violence which, like terrorism, need to be further researched. The central argument of the thesis is that political assassination cannot be justified and the following research questions will be addressed:

- Can the assassinations analysed in the thesis be categorised as political assassinations?
- Can the justifications that are analysed within the thesis offer justifications for these political assassinations?
- Are political assassinations only successful as existential acts?

The thesis will begin by trying to clearly state what constitutes a political assassination and how it is different from terrorism. It will then analyse the various justifications that can be used to justify political assassinations. The thesis will illustrate three theoretical approaches that can be used. These are the instrumental justification, the non - utilitarian justification and terroristic justification. It will then examine the three cases of political assassinations which include that of Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Rajiv Gandhi of India. Each case study will analyse the questions stated above and attempt to find the answers. The thesis will then explore the political assassination regime by assessing the advantages and disadvantages of prohibition and will also raise some interesting questions about potential legal framework for the phenomenon. The thesis will then conclude my examining similarities and differences between the cases by focusing on three main factors. These are target, ideology and motives and finally aims.

Introduction

In the field of political violence, little has been written on the phenomenon of political assassination. This lack of research has meant that political assassinations are not well understood. This in itself is strange. Political violence, in all its forms, attracts a great deal of attention from some sections of society, for example academics and policy makers. It is something we read about in the papers on a daily basis and academics are constantly trying to grasp the issues concerned. Despite this general fascination with political violence it is difficult to understand why the area of political assassinations has not generated more scholarly attention. In the aftermath of September 11th, there have been a number of events that have turned world attention towards political assassinations. The War on Terrorism has raised the question of the political desirability of assassinating particular individuals. The United States' attempt to find Osama Bin Laden has raised important questions about whether he should be assassinated once found or whether the United States should put him on trial and jail or execute him with due legal process. The intention of the United States to topple the regime in Iraq raised the question about the desirability of assassinating Saddam Hussain.¹

Whether or not the United States has got a right to consider carrying out such an act is debatable. The world has been made to

¹ Although this is not the focus of this thesis as the assassination of Saddam Hussein would fall under state assassination. The analyses of such an act would have an impact on the phenomenon of political assassinations.

question whether political assassinations are reasonable means to achieve goals and especially whether political assassinations can be considered ethical. Also, if a country like the United States decides to attack Iraq, as a country which is considered a danger to the international community, one needs to keep in mind that there are other countries within the international community that can pose similar dangers. At what point does one draw the line to stop actions such as toppling a regime? However, there is more to the debate and it cannot be seen in such simple terms. Attacking a country is not just about the country being a danger to the international system - it is primarily about countries thinking about their own interests. For example, the United States concerned itself very little with Afghanistan and the Taliban regime previously, as they posed no immediate threat to the United States even though the United States was aware of links between Bin Laden and the Taliban, and the probability that Bin Laden was living in Afghanistan. In view of the lack of research on political assassinations and the enormous interest that is being generated as a result of recent events, this thesis attempts (a) to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of political assassination and (b) to examine the ethical justifications for political assassinations.

Definitions of Political Violence

In short,

political violence, roughly defined, is a considerable destroying use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law, directed to a change in the politics, personnel or system of government, and hence also directed to changes in the existence of individuals in the society and perhaps other societies²

The degree of violence is different in developed, less developed and under-developed countries. This is because the causes of violence can be different amongst different countries. This, however, does not imply that political assassinations are less likely in developed countries as opposed to less developed and under-developed countries, or vice versa. In developed countries with higher standards of living, the public may be unhappy with certain reforms and policies, which may stir violence. The only way to improve the situation is the elimination of the person considered responsible. For example, the attempted assassination in Brighton by the IRA of Margaret Thatcher with whom some of the British people were very dissatisfied. On the other hand, in a less or under-developed country people might be subject to intolerable conditions. Such situations may instigate violence and even lead to political assassinations. A couple of examples of such situations might

² Ted Honderich, Violence For Equality. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1980) p23.

be: first the Tamil Tigers fighting against the Singhalese government in Sri Lanka and secondly the Palestinians fighting against Israel.

This leads us to question on a broader level whether violence can be right, that is, whether we can justify violence under any circumstances. In the words of Virginia Held "to justify a position or an action is to give reason for its acceptance or performance which a reasonable person ought to find persuasive".³ There are a number of different forms of justification that can be found. These include political justification, legal justifications, religious justification and moral justifications. Held points out that each of these justifications "occurs within a relevant system".⁴ This thesis will concentrate on moral justifications, but will also pay due attention to the religious and political justifications that can be found for war and political violence. It is possible to have overlap in terms of justifications found, because "in a sense all decisions are moral decisions".⁵

Definition of Political Assassination

It is true that

politics always involves conflicts over values,
because leaders come to symbolise political
virtues and vices, because political leaders are just

³ Virginia Held, "Justification : Legal and Political", in Ethics Vol. 86, Issue 1 (Oct., 1975, 1-16)p1.

⁴ Ibid. p2.

⁵ Ibid. p15.

as frail and mortal as anyone else, and because there are always some zealots and psychopaths about, assassination is obviously a possibility at any time.⁶

A political assassination is a politically motivated act of killing, directed against prominent figures in political life. It is not just simply a murder; political assassination entails killing individuals of political eminence. The motives behind the killings have to be political and the killer has particular political aims or goals which could only be fulfilled through political assassination.⁷

Indeed political assassinations can be carried out by a number of different people or groups of people. Terrorist groups are specifically known for using political assassination as one of their most important tools. There are other people who also commit political assassinations and these include: religious fundamentalists, lone madmen, hired killers, political opposition, military coups and, finally, governments.⁸

Contemporary examples of political assassinations, according to this definition, include the killing of the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam in 1991. This was aimed at disengaging the Indian military from interfering in the Tigers' struggle for independence from Sri Lanka, thus furthering their overall political

⁶ Murray Edelman and Rita James Simon. "Presidential Assassinations : their meaning and impact on American Society" in *Ethics* Vol.79. No. 3. p199.

⁷ Political murder is a term is used interchangeably for a political assassination.

⁸ Furthermore, political assassinations can be committed against any type of political figure from military generals to religious leaders. However, for the purposes of this thesis political figure will imply only heads of state.

objectives of national self-determination. Another example is the assassination of the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, in 1981, by Lieutenant Khaled Ahmed Shawki al Islambouli, a member of the 'al Jihad' organisation, an Islamic fundamentalist group aimed at preventing Egypt from moving away from the true path of Islam. Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel, was assassinated by Yigal Amir in order to put an end to the Peace Process. The attempted assassination of Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister in October, 1984, by the Irish Republican Army was committed for a number of reasons. The Irish Republican Army "wanted revenge – for those ten dead IRA hunger strikers; partly for the prestige that would accrue, in their head hunting subcultures, from the acquisition of so spectacular a scalp; and partly in order to frighten other British politicians".⁹ In each of these cases, the victim was a political figure, there was a political motive behind the assassination, and it had political consequences. There is a problem with people not being able to distinguish between political assassinations and terrorism. There is big difference between the two. The historical background will illustrate that, since terrorist groups have advocated the use of political assassination for a long time, and continue to use it at times a tool, a distinction between the two must be maintained.

Historical Background

⁹ Why compromise will not stop the IRA. Connor Cruise O'Brien.

The history of assassination stretches far back into the past. This section of the thesis will examine the history of assassination from the ancient world to the present. It will also show how assassinations were not limited to any particular society but the phenomenon of assassinations has been seen all over the world from Ancient Rome to the Indian subcontinent.

As Saul Padover states, “assassination is not only common to political societies everywhere; it also has a long and not dishonourable history”.¹⁰ The Middle East occupies an important place as it “gave birth to Mankind’s earliest known efforts at political organisation”.¹¹ This means that “it also experienced and with increasing care recorded instances of political homicide still able to hold our interest”.¹² Within the Middle East, groups like the Zealots and the Assassins used assassination as their primary violent strategy. Many of the earliest assassinations, however, had strong religious purpose and did not necessarily have strong political reasons. There were periods in history when religious purposes were responsible for the practice of assassination, and periods when political reasons reigned over religious reasons. However, more recently, assassinations have been used frequently as a tool to achieve political goals.

As mentioned above some of the earliest active groups to use assassinations were the Zealots-Sircarii and Assassins (also known as Ismailis-Nizari). Essentially, the two groups were terrorist organisations

¹⁰ Saul Padover, “Patterns of Assassination in Occupied Territory”, in The Public Opinion Quarterly, Winter 1943. p681.

¹¹ Franklin Ford, Political Murder, From Tyrannicide to Terrorism. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) p5.

¹² Ibid. p5.

who used assassinations as a major part of their campaign. These two groups are the most frequently cited examples of assassins in history, and they are important to this thesis because of their proclivity towards committing assassinations.¹³ Both the Zealots and the Assassins displayed their own distinctive traits and had consequential effects on society. The most important aspect of the two groups was that religion was the important driving force behind their actions. Additionally, they had political objectives behind their struggle. The terror they unleashed was portrayed as holy terror and they were known as the Holy Terrorists. In order to understand the history of assassinations it would be essential to analyse each group separately. Under the strictest sense of the definition of political assassination used in this thesis the groups did commit assassination, but not political assassinations. Examining the history of assassinations would be incomplete without acknowledging the groups, as they are viewed in the literature as the earliest groups to use assassination as a tool in their struggle.

Thus the tradition of political violence is not new within the Israeli context. In fact, violence in Israel dates back to the days before the creation of Israel, and fact, political assassinations have always been an integral part of Israeli society. The Zealots can be traced back to a millenarian Jewish sect who fought against the Roman occupation of what is now Israel, between 66-73A.D. The group existed for approximately twenty-five years. The Zealots, "...were also inspired by the hope for messianic deliverance and believed that those who gave their

¹³ Furthermore, since the term assassination has Arabic roots which subsequently entered the western languages also makes it necessary to examine the Assassins.

lives in this struggle would gain immortality".¹⁴ The dagger or the sica was the main weapon used by them and their aim was to gain maximum publicity.

The Zealots would emerge from the anonymous obscurity of a crowded marketplace, draw the sica concealed beneath his robes and, in plain view of those present, dramatically slit the throat of a Roman legionnaire or a Jewish citizen who had been judged by the group guilty of betrayal, apostasy or both¹⁵

The Zealots engaged in both "individual assassination and wholesale slaughter" by "employing a primitive form of chemical warfare". The Zealots poisoned Roman wells and granaries and "even sabotag[ed] Jerusalem's water supply".¹⁶ A big part of their struggle was directed towards the Greek population, as in Judah against the Romans who governed them. Thus, there were political motives behind the assassinations. The campaign of assassination they launched was all the more chilling because its victims included not only occupation officials, but also Saducees and other Jews identified as complaisant toward

¹⁴ David C Rapoport, "Religion and Terror: Thugs , Assassins and Zealots", In International Terrorism, Characteristics, Causes, Controls. (St. Martin's Press, 1990) p152.

¹⁵ Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1998) p88.

¹⁶ Bruce Hoffman, "Holy Terror: The Implications of Terrorism Motivated By a Religious Imperative", in The World Today. Vol. 52, No 3, Mach 1996. p1.

Rome".¹⁷ They committed the murders in broad daylight. Holy days were in particular ideal for committing assassinations. Ford, correctly, states that "the Zealots gave the world one of its most startling examples of murderous certainty in the absolute moral rightness of a cause".¹⁸ The tradition of assassinations was well established within the community. It can also be noted that the Zealots also practised carrying out assassinations in the name of religion, as this would enable the Zealots to use their "messianic hopes to seek maximum publicity".¹⁹ However, this reliance on religion can be summed up by saying that the messianic angle to their ideology "suggested the object of terror and permitted methods necessary to achieve it".²⁰

Furthermore, there are a number of examples of political assassinations in the *Tanach* (the Hebrew Bible). One of the most famous examples was the political assassination of Gedaliah in 586 B.C. or five years later, during the rule of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 586 B.C who conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the first Jewish Temple. Gadaliah was appointed as the governor of Judea and encouraged surviving Jews to repopulate empty cities, work the land and resign themselves to living under the rule of Babylon. Son of Nethaniah who was the son of Elishama, Ishmael was a member of the royal family and was not too elated with Gadaliah, as he has become head of state without being a member of the royal family. As a result, Ishmael assassinated Gedaliah. Political assassination was thus used as a means of social and

¹⁷ Ford, *op.cit.* p91.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ David C Rapoport, "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions", in *American Political Science Review*. Vol.78, No.3, September 1984. p668.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p669.

political control, that is, it was used to achieve specific results. For example, Gedaliah was assassinated because Ishmael wanted to become king.

The Assassins were active between 1090 and 1275 AD. They were a radical offshoot of the Muslim Shi'a, who fought the Christian Crusaders in the attempt to re-conquer present-day Syria and Iran. This was very much a political goal for the Assassins and this meant that "they had political objectives"²¹ just like the Zealots. They sought to purify Islam by making political and religious institutions inseparable. It can be seen that "simply using the threat of assassination was often enough for the Assassins to cow their potential enemies into submission".²² The name is derived from the Arabic for hashish-eater, as the Assassin would ritualistically imbibe hashish before committing the assassination in order "to produce dreams of heavenly rewards while removing the fears and inhibitions of selected origins".²³ The act of assassination was considered as a sacramental or divine duty to hasten the millennium. The Assassins wanted to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah or Mahdi who would create the perfect world - the establishment of an Islamic society. Their victims were generally prominent figures murdered in royal courts or venerated places on holy days. The murder weapon was always a dagger which guaranteed the death of the victim.²⁴ The Assassin

²¹ *Ibid.* p664.

²² International Encyclopedia of Terrorism (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997) p40.

²³ Ford, *op.cit.* p103.

²⁴ It is known that other Muslim cults used other means of killing their victims. For example one cult used to strangle their victims with scarves.

usually made no attempt to escape if he survived. As Hoffman has argued:

An additional- perhaps even more compelling- motivation was the promise that, should the assassin perish in the course of his act, he would immediately ascend to a glorious heaven: thus fostering an ethos of self sacrifice and suicidal martyrdom that is apparent in some of the Muslim Terrorist movements today.²⁵

Martyrdom holds a special significance for many Muslims because an individual dies in order to eliminate Islam's enemies. The creation of the status Martyr for dead Assassins was hoped to encourage more individuals to become Assassins. To establish an Islamic society it was necessary to wage a Jihad or Holy War against the enemies of Islam. The assailants were also described as *fiyadeen* which indicates that "they were considered religious sacrifices who freed themselves from the guilt of all sins and thereby gained entry into paradise".²⁶ Their victims were usually orthodox religious men or political leaders who had strayed from the path of true religion. The *fiyadeen* developed a very strong relationship with the victim. This was done over years "through devotion and skill". The Assassin "would gain his master's trust and, then, at the appropriate time, the faithful servant would plunge a dagger into his

²⁵ Hoffman, 'Holy Terror', *op.cit.* p1.

²⁶ Rapoport, 'Fear and Trembling', *op.cit.* p665.

master's back".²⁷ In order "to maximize their psychological impact" and the vulnerability of the victim "the assassinations took place in front of numerous witnesses in venerated sites like mosques, where sanctity provided immunity, or in highly protected sites where loyal supporters surrounded the victim".²⁸ The importance of this was to draw attention to their cause. Also, assassinations were considered an attractive means of spreading terror. Furthermore, Hodgson points out, "though Muslims ...commonly...used an assassination as an expedient, the adoption of...a regular and admitted [assassination] policy horrified them and has horrified men ever since".²⁹ It is interesting to know that, irrespective of the fact that assassinations horrified many Muslims, the Assassins continued to commit such an act. One important aspect evident here is the way the Assassins justified their acts in terms of religion as the acts were necessary to purify Islam. The group disappeared by 1275.

Similar to the Zealots and Assassins was an Indian based group known as the Thugs. Although the Thugs killed for different reasons this group was one of the earliest in the region, and dated from the seventh century until the mid-nineteenth century. They existed far longer than the Assassins and the Zealots. The Thugs were an Indian religious association of professional robbers and murderers who would mislead travellers, steal their money and ritualistically strangle them as sacrificial offerings to Kali, the Hindu Goddess of terror and destruction. Approximately one million people were thought to be victims of the

²⁷ *Ibid.* p666.

²⁸ Rapoport, 'Sacred terror', *op.cit.* p121.

²⁹ Rapoport, 'Fear and Trembling', *op.cit.* p666.

Thugs. This number surpasses the number of killings committed by modern day terrorists. However, the group cannot be compared to the Zealots or the Assassins as they lacked any political strategy to their campaign. The Thugs, unlike the Assassins or the Zealots did not target specific individuals. The murders committed by the Thugs were motivated purely by religious, not political, reasons; this was unlike both the Zealots and the Assassins, who did have some political motives involved in their struggle. Due to the commitment of each to Judaism, Islam and Hinduism, these groups illustrate the importance of religion in their campaigns. The three groups show that assassinations were a part of certain societies in the past and that assassinations have always been an aspect of our history.

Examples of political assassination can also be found in the Bible. A well-known assassination is that of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, in 681BC. Sennacherib invaded Judah but was defeated. He went home having lost more than 5000 men and

it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the Sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead³⁰

³⁰ Brian Bailey, The Assassination File. A Case Book of Crime, Conspiracy and VIP Victims. (London: W.H Allen, 1991) p4.

Another case of political assassination can be found in the Tanach: that of "Ehud of the tribe of Benjamin who assassinated Eglon, the King of Moab and then won Israel eighty years of freedom".³¹ Thus, an assassination was seen "as a pragmatic way of getting rid of political opponents, and as a tool in struggles for the royal throne"³² illustrating that political motives were an important factor.

Furthermore, there were numerous other political assassinations in Europe. Some of the most important political assassinations can be found in Ancient Greece and in the Roman Republic. In Ancient Greece, the most famous assassination was that of Hipparchus in 514 B.C. When Pisistratus, the tyrant of Athens, died he left his three sons Hippias, Hipparchus and Thessalus as heirs to the throne. Much debate exists about how power was also divided amongst the three, but Hipparchus was known to be powerful in his own right. Hipparchus was thought to be a tyrant and as a result was stabbed to death by local aristocrats Harmodius and Aristogiton. The obvious reason behind the assassination was to free Greece from being ruled by a tyrant, thus making it a political assassination. The significance of such an act was immense and this can be seen by the "erection of statues to Harmodius and Aristogiton in the city market place, an honour never previously accorded to anyone".³³ Subsequently, Thucydides came up with another explanation, claiming that "Harmodius and Aristogiton had been moved neither by patriotism nor by love of liberty but by the passions born of a homosexual

³¹ Yehuda, Political Assassinations by the Jews: A Rhetorical Device for Justice (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993 p99.

³² Ibid. p100.

³³ Encyclopedia of World Terrorism. (New York: M.E.Sharpe, INC:1997) p29.

triangle”.³⁴ Despite such claims it is difficult to ignore that Hipparchus was thought to be a tyrant and that political motivations were also an important factor, which, along with other reasons, may have led to the assassination.

“The Romans’ prolonged success in containing the threat of assassination” is often noted but “it was an ability they eventually lost”.³⁵

The Romans survived almost

four centuries without the politically motivated slaying of a leading public figure from well before the traditional founding date of 509 B.C. –the last king, Tarquin the Proud, having murdered his predecessor, Servius Tullius, in 534-until the assassination of Sempronius Gracchus in 133³⁶

The assassination of Servius Tullius was one of the first instances of a political assassination in Ancient Rome by Tarquin the Proud. Tarquin “first accused him of being an unlawful ruler hoping that the people could dethrone him, but having failed in his purpose, he killed Servius and proclaimed himself king”.³⁷ Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus were another two political figures politically assassinated in Rome. Tiberius Gracchus, after having served the military, decided to announce his candidacy for election on the ten

³⁴ Ford, *op.cit.* p27.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p47.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Roma History and Civilisation,
http://www.mclink.it/n/citrag/roma/doc/history/est_026.htm

tribunes of the plebs. His brother followed a similar path and together they carried out extensive land reforms. As a result, Tiberius had enraged a large number of people and while seeking re-election was publicly assassinated on the steps of the Capitol by a mob of senators headed by patrician P. Scipio Nasica. Gaius Gracchus furthered his brother's policies and added many of his own. One of the most noted of these was his proposal to give "Roman citizenship to Latins and Latin status to Italian allies, both to protect them from Roman excesses and to enable them to participate in agrarian land distributions".³⁸ This proved to be very unpopular and he was assassinated. He was "formally declared to be an enemy of the republic".³⁹

The most famous of all political assassinations of the Republic was that of Julius Caesar. He was assassinated in March, 44 B.C. Ford states that "in Caesar the republican government faced a redoubtable foe, skilled as a diplomat, politician, and general, conqueror of unnumbered Celtic and Germanic foes from Provence to Britain".⁴⁰ Caesar, along with Pompey and Crassus, formed the first Triumvirate. While his ten-year term as proconsul was coming to an end he decided to seek re-election as proconsul, and was elected in 49 B.C. Once elected, Caesar decided to hunt down the fugitive Pompey, as his alliance with him had ended and a "civil war had broken out between Caesar and Pompey".⁴¹ Both believed that they could be dictators of Rome. However, the result was the

³⁸ Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, <http://heraklia.fws1.com/contemporaries/gracchi/>

³⁹ Ford, *op.cit.* p57.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p61.

⁴¹ Encyclopedia of World Terrorism *op.cit.* p30.

assassination of Pompey.⁴² Caesar returned as a dictator. Soon after “even his supporters saw this as a threat to the republic”.⁴³ Thus began the plot for his assassination by as many as sixty men, a large number of whom were nominated for public office by Caesar himself. The political assassinations of Servius Tullius, Sempronius Gracchus, Gaius Gracchus and Caesar are only some of the famous assassinations to have taken place in Rome. In each case there was a specific political figure, a political motive and a political consequence to the act.

Great Britain also experienced a large number of political assassinations. One of the first was that of Edward II, who “proved to be a less than effectual monarch, troubled from without by Robert the Bruce of Scotland who defeated English forces on the battlefield and within by his own barons who constantly threatened his throne”.⁴⁴ He suffered badly from trying to secure his hold on Scotland and was left at the mercy of the barons and his cousin, Thomas of Lancaster. His own powers over appointments and finances was restricted by Ordinances which were drafted by the baronial committee in order to curb his powers. He eventually regained some power and felt he could revoke the Ordinances. However, his wife Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer, an exiled baron, decided to invade England as Edward’s support had declined. He was forced to abdicate in 1326, in favour of his son Edward III, but Mortimer was in charge. Eventually, Isabella and Mortimer decided that it was too dangerous to keep him alive as he might try to

⁴² For further details refer to Franklin Ford.

⁴³ Encyclopedia of World Terrorism, *op.cit.* p30.

⁴⁴ Carl Sifakis, Encyclopedia of Assassinations, (New York: Check Mark Books, 1991) p56.

rally opponents. These political reasons led to his assassination in September, 1327. Another political assassination was that of the King of England, William Rufus, who succeeded to the throne after the death of his father William the Conqueror in 1098, and was assassinated in 1100.⁴⁵ He was “hardly held in such high esteem by others in his realm,”⁴⁶ which was evident when an arrow struck him in the back. The deadly wound came from the knight, Walter Tirel, under order from the King’s younger brother, Henry, who succeeded him immediately. There is some debate about whether the death was an accident; however, “it seems more likely, perhaps, that he was a victim of political assassination,”⁴⁷ due to his brother’s succession. Furthermore, Queen Elizabeth I faced several unsuccessful assassination attempts on her life. The attempts always had a political motive, which was to raise “to the throne Mary, the Catholic queen of Scots”.⁴⁸ Likewise, King of England, James I faced an attempted assassination by Guy Fawkes as he was “angered by the increasing oppression of Roman Catholics in England”.⁴⁹ Here again there was a political reason for committing the assassination as Fawkes believed that assassinating James I would stop the oppression.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries most of Europe was in religious turmoil. As a result, it is not surprising that a number of assassinations which occurred were heavily influenced by religion. However, the assassinations were mostly of heads of states, and had

⁴⁵ It was said that that Rufus died in an accident however it was most likely an assassination. For further reference see Encyclopedia of Assassination by Carl Sifakis. p232.

⁴⁶ Sifakis, *op.cit.* p232.

⁴⁷ Bailey, *op.cit.* p22.

⁴⁸ Sifakis, *op.cit.* p58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p103.

specific religious inclinations, the hope being that the replacement would follow different policies. Two political assassinations, that were very important in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were those of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange (also known as William the Silent), and King Henri IV of France. William was raised as a Catholic, but later adopted Protestantism. This led to the hatred of Philip of Spain. Therefore, William fought for the freedom of the Netherlands from Spanish domination and “as the prince of the Netherlands, he was accused of heresy by the Spanish Inquisition, and his assassination was long plotted by Philip and his representative”.⁵⁰ There were approximately five attempts on his life, and in 1584 he was assassinated by Balthazar Gerard at a private dinner party. This was a political assassination as William wanted to unite the Spanish Netherlands into one independent nation. At the same time, a strong religious motive behind the assassination cannot be denied. Philip of Spain believed the “the entire population of the Netherlands to be heretical”⁵¹ and he wanted by all means possible to prevent William from creating a united Spanish Netherlands. The result of not being able to create a united Spanish Netherlands had important political consequences as “the assassination of William the Silent did thus influence the course of European history”.⁵²

Henry IV, also known as Henry of Navarre, “is remembered as one of France’s most popular kings, but no less than 20 attempts were

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p232.

⁵¹ Bailey, *op.cit.* p40.

⁵² *Ibid.* p42.

made on his life during his reign".⁵³ He was brought up as a Protestant, but embraced Catholicism. In 1610 Henry IV was stabbed by Francois Ravailac who was "convinced it was his duty to save France from the horror of Protestantism".⁵⁴ Furthermore, Ravailac believed that "the King had failed in his Christian duty".⁵⁵ The assassination was also an attempt to replace Henry IV with someone who would not impose Protestant values. This would then imply underlying political reasons with strong religious aspects behind the act.

Additionally, within the Jewish context before the creation of the state of Israel, a number of political assassinations of Jewish people were carried out in Europe. Examples of attempted political assassinations before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 include the assassination of von val on May 18, 1902, a county executive who ordered the attack on a group of Jewish demonstrators from the Jewish ghetto. His assassin was Hirsch Lekert, who shot von Val. The assassin was labelled as a martyr. Another is the assassination by David Frankfurter Wilhelm Gustloff, leader of the Swiss branch of the Nazi party whom David considered a very dangerous person. Thus, on February 4, 1936, David shot and fatally wounded Gustloff.

Furthermore, a number of political assassinations (successful and attempted) were carried out by Jews in Palestine. Aref El-Arsan was assassinated by David Tidhar and Yehoshua Levi on January 17, 1975. Aref El-Arsan was actually known as Aref Effendy and served as an aid

⁵³ Robert J Knecht, The French Civil Wars (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2000) p283

⁵⁴ Sifakis, op.cit. p92.

⁵⁵ Knecht, op.cit. p283.

to a Turkish commander by the name of Hassan Back. The assassination of Tufik Bay (who was an important police officer during the Turkish occupation of Palestine) who carried out by Yerachmiel Lukatcher from Hashomer (the Hashomer was dissolved in 1920 and some members created a small secret organisation called the Hakibbutz). Additionally, an example of an assassination committed by Jews in Israel is the assassination of Dr Rudolf Kasztner by Dan Shemer, Ze' ev Ekstein, and Joseph Menkes in Tel Aviv on March 2, 1957. Yehuda in his book "Political Assassinations by Jews" very briefly describes the eighty-eight political assassinations committed by Jews in Palestine and Israel. He thus, illustrates the culture of assassination that already exists in the region.⁵⁶

In the contemporary world, as mentioned before, assassinations became a tool used frequently by terrorists. In most cases, assassinations were committed for political motives with political consequences thus making them political assassinations. For example, Narodnaya Volya, a Russian terrorist group which operated in Russia between January, 1878, and March, 1881, aimed to overthrow the tyrannical Tsarist regime. The alienation of the Russian masses enabled the group to engage in dramatic acts of violence to draw attention to their cause. They used "propaganda by deed" by selecting specific individuals who "embod[ied] the autocratic, oppressive state"⁵⁷ These acts involved planning similar to that needed for committing a political assassination. Therefore, it was

⁵⁶ All the above examples are taken from Nachmen Ben Yehuda's book. For further details see Ben Yehuda, 'Political Assassinations by the Jews', op.cit.

⁵⁷ Hoffman, 'Inside terrorism', op.cit. p18.

easier to target their victims, who were the Tsar, other members of the royal family and senior government officials chosen for their symbolic value as representatives of the regime. One of the most important political assassinations by Narodnaya Volya was that of Tsar Alexander II, in 1881. However, this event led to the group's demise. Furthermore, a successor organisation of Narodnaya Volya tried to assassinate the Grand Duke Serge Alexandrovich on a number of occasions and was eventually successful. The Anarchists were another organisation who carried out a number of assassinations. In fact, the "anarchists were responsible for an impressive string of assassinations of heads of state".⁵⁸

At around the same time, the Narodna Obrana, a pan-Serbian group established to promote Serbian cultural and national activities, began to use political assassinations as a means of promoting their goals. Narodna Obrana attempted to kill the governor of Bosnia. The Black Hand, a radical faction split from the Narodna Obrana, also resorted to violent means in pursuit of their objectives. The Black Hand had strong links with the Young Bosnians, a group created to unite the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. They wanted to establish a greater Serbia, including Bosnia/Herzegovina. Finally, Gavrilo Princip, who was a member of the Young Bosnians and the Black Hand, was responsible for the political assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. The above assassinations were political because they all involved either the hoped for overthrow of the Russian Tsar or the establishment of a pan-Serbian nation.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p20.

The United States has experienced its fair share of assassinations, though not all of them were strictly political. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth in 1865 and although it was claimed that the assassin was irrational, and had personal motives, there were political reasons for the assassination. As Clarke states "his hatred for the President was both personal and political".⁵⁹ Lincoln was unpopular as a President in the south as well as in part of the north. This was because some in the south wanted to keep slavery, and the north wanted to end slavery. He also faced vicious opposition within his cabinet and the Congress. Furthermore, there was controversy surrounding his re-election in 1864.⁶⁰ As pointed out by Clarke, "to ignore the political circumstances and events of the civil war era is to miss the most important element in Booth's motives".⁶¹ Additionally, there was an attempted political assassination of President Truman by the Puerto Rican nationalists Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola in 1950. This unsuccessful attempt was "an expression of resentment about United States foreign policy"⁶² and "their primary purpose was to awaken the American public to conditions in Puerto Rico".⁶³

Latin America has experienced a large number of assassinations. Ford states "assassinations of a more or less traditional kind had been a fairly constant feature of Latin America's post imperial republics, in which at least forty significant political killings occurred between the

⁵⁹ James W. Clarke, American Assassin (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1982) p28.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p19-20.

⁶¹ Ibid. p20.

⁶² Ibid. p63.

⁶³ Ibid. p71.

early nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth".⁶⁴ One of the most important political assassinations was that of General Rafael Trujillo Molina, a former president of the Dominican Republic, in 1961, and "the assassination of the President became the most sensational public death of 1961".⁶⁵ He was a dictator and "his rule was cruel and senseless; his weapons corruption and terrorism".⁶⁶ He had even tried to assassinate the Venezuelan president in the fifties. As a result of all these activities, hostility towards Trujillo grew tremendously and, in May 1961, Trujillo's car was ambushed and he was machine-gunned to death. In every sense this was a political assassination. In just one year, Ford points out in his book a large number of political assassination have sometimes occurred in Latin American countries. Some examples of people assassinated in 1971 for instance are: Former Bolivian Director of Intelligence, Roberto Quintanilla, shot to death; former Chilean minister of Interior and the leader of the conservative Chilean Christian Democratic Party; and Guatemalan congressman, Jose Luis Arriaga Arriola. In the Philippines Benigno Aquino Jr was assassinated in 1983. He planned to oppose President Ferdinand Marcos in the elections. Before Benigno's election plans, Marcos had him put in prison for subversion. Aquino was released from prison in 1980 and was allowed to travel to the United States for heart surgery. In the United States, Aquino engaged in research and organising political support at home. This prompted him to return to the political scene in the Philippines. President

⁶⁴ Ford, *op.cit.* p338.

⁶⁵ Bailey, *op.cit.* p123.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p123.

Marcos saw Aquino as a threat to his reign, and had him assassinated as soon as he landed in Manila.

Violence has always been imbedded in Indian society. India has witnessed numerous forms of violence during the Indian War of Independence, ethnic conflict, wars with foreign countries, religious riots and terroristic violence. Violence, and more specifically political assassinations, existed in the days prior to colonial rule and can still be found in contemporary society. In the pre-colonial days, rulers of different provinces fought to oust each other to achieve territorial expansion and wealth. This more than often involved the killing of innocent people or specifically selected targets like rulers or high officials in the kingdom in order to acquire territory, money or even revenge. In most cases the assassinations of rulers were politically dominated. That is, assassination victims were mostly political figures targeted in order to replace them with another. The process was essentially about power and prestige. In fact, the Mughal period of Indian history provides enough evidence to show how rulers were very often targets for murderers. For example, Shah Jahan, one of the greatest Indian rulers, while pursuing his Deccan policy whereby he wanted to acquire territory in the south, continued to annihilate rulers. Furthermore, in the event of any disagreement over policies initiated or pursued by rulers, there was a tendency amongst the people to attempt to assassinate the ruler. All this clearly illustrates that assassinations, in particular political assassinations, have always been a part of Indian political culture. In fact, post - independence India has seen political

assassinations of several Indian leaders. This can be illustrated by a few examples.

One of the earliest assassinations was that of the man who played a crucial role in the Indian struggle for Independence, Mahatma Gandhi, who was shot dead on January 30, 1948 as he was walking through a garden on his way to evening prayers in Delhi. His killer was a man called Nathuram V. Godse, the editor of a Hindu newspaper.⁶⁷ Gandhi had always been against the use of violence and questioned the divide that existed between the Hindus and Muslims. After the assassination, Godse stated that the main reason behind the assassination was that of Gandhi's policy of non-violence towards the Muslims. Furthermore, Godse could no longer stand the atrocities committed on the Hindus because of Hinduism. The importance of religion as a motivating factor comes to the forefront as a result of this assassination. It should not be forgotten that the assassination was committed at a time when the entire country was crippled with religious turmoil, as the country had just been partitioned on the basis of religious differences into India and Pakistan.

Also, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguard in 1984. It is thought that it was "her concern for Indian unity that led to her death".⁶⁸ She believed that "India could function as a nonreligious democracy, a belief that was not shared by the Sikhs of the India's Punjab state, whose lives and faith were tightly bound".⁶⁹ As a result,

⁶⁷ This was not the first attempt on Gandhi's life. In fact, 10 days earlier a man named Madanlal a refugee from Punjab threw a country made bomb at Gandhi while he was addressing a prayer meeting.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p150.

⁶⁹ Linda Laucella, *Assassination, The Politics of Murder* (Los Angeles: Lowell House: 1998) p370.

there was an ongoing political conflict with the Sikhs. Therefore, during her term, she had to deal with terrorist problems in Punjab which contributed to underground Sikh militancy.⁷⁰ The Sikhs were fighting to establish their own nation out of the north-western part of Punjab. Indira Gandhi was determined not to give in to the terrorists. In the course of time, the chief Minister of Punjab, Zail Singh, became sympathetic towards the Sikh cause and helped the terrorists establish a base inside the Golden Temple⁷¹ at Amritsar. This was followed by an order from Indira Gandhi for the Indian Army to raid the Golden Temple, the Sikh holiest shrine, which was also the headquarters of the separatist movement at Amritsar. The entire manoeuvre lasted four days and large quantities of arms and ammunitions were seized, and the temple suffered significant structural damage. This infuriated the Sikhs further as they felt that Indira Gandhi had committed a sacrilegious act. This was a major mistake on Gandhi's part and hundreds of innocent Sikhs were killed. What angered the majority of the Sikh population was the extensive damage to the Sikhs' holiest shrine. However, the fact that Gandhi had revealed the stockpiling of ammunitions that was taking place in the temple, had immense political significance as the Sikhs felt they were being targeted by the government. Her assassination was thus due to a combination of a history of political conflict with the Sikhs and revenge for attacking the shrine.

There have been numerous assassinations throughout history and in various different cultures. Assassination is ingrained in society and is

⁷⁰ The Sikhs received training, arms and ammunitions from Pakistan.

⁷¹ Sikhs holiest shrine.

an act which cannot be ignored. A study of history clearly shows how, at certain periods different reasons were responsible for assassinations. Although not all of them were political assassinations, in most cases there were some underlying political reasons. In recent times, most assassinations have been political. A large part of this is due to the fact that most assassinations today are committed by groups, or individuals linked to groups, whose aim is to fulfil political goals. The three political leaders analysed in this thesis, Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Rajiv Gandhi of India and Yitzhak Rabin of Israel were all assassinated by terrorist groups who had their own political visions and were unhappy about the political situation in their respective countries.

Methodology

The next section of the thesis needs to address the methodology. The aim of the thesis is to contribute to hypothesis - building by answering questions like: what is a political assassination? Can the justifications that are analysed within the thesis justify the political assassinations? Are political assassinations ever successful as a political strategy, or are they only successful as existential acts?

There are a variety of methodologies that can be used to explain the questions. The single case study method is one of them. For qualitative researchers, however, "the intensive but an uncontrolled examination of single cases cannot directly result in empirical

generalisation and cannot be used to test hypotheses".⁷² Although a single case study would enable the researcher to study the case in every detail, it would, however, be impossible to make any sort of generalisations from just one case and thus test a hypothesis. As a result, this method would not be appropriate for what this thesis aims to achieve.

Comparative analysis seems to be the best suited for hypothesis building. Charles Ragin, in his article 'Using Comparative Methods to Study Diversity', elucidates how "comparative researchers examine patterns of similarities and differences across cases and try to come to terms with their diversity".⁷³ One of the main reasons researchers use comparative research is to draw out the diversity as well as the similarities that exists between cases. Comparative research draws commonalities between cases: "comparative researchers consider how the different parts of each case- those aspects that are relevant to the investigation- fit together; they try to make sense of each case".⁷⁴ A limited number of cases are used in order to derive common conclusions from the research. This is the reason why only three cases have been chosen for analysis here. This will enable the researcher to find concrete conclusions from the analyses in the limited space available in the thesis. As Ragin points out

in comparative research diversity, by contrast, the
category of phenomenon that the investigator is

⁷² Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable -Cases Strategy in Comparative Research", in Comparative Political Studies, Vol.8, No.2, July 1975. p160.

⁷³ Charles C. Ragin, Constructing Social Research (California: Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oakes) 1994. p107.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p105.

studying is usually specified at the outset, and the goal of the investigation is to explain the diversity within a particular set of cases

It is expected that the comparative approach will help identify the diversities prevalent in political assassination cases, and these diversities will be analysed at length. In conclusion,

in research that emphasises diversity the focus is on the similarities within a category of cases with the same outcome that (1) distinguish that category from other categories and (2) explain the outcome manifested by that category. In other words, the study of diversity is the study of similarities and differences within a given set of cases⁷⁵

One must mention the other comparative methodological approaches that lead to theory development, and why they will not be used in this thesis. Qualitative researchers search for common statistically accountable factors amongst a large number of cases. That is when they “study commonalities they usually view multiple cases as many instances of the same thing”.⁷⁶ The focus of the thesis is not just commonalities, but is also looking for diversities. Furthermore, the goal of quantitative

⁷⁵ Ibid. p106.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p107.

research “is to explain the covariation of one variable with another, usually across many, many cases”.⁷⁷ This reduces the familiarity between cases as the number of cases is too large. There is a limit to the number of cases that can be examined in a thesis and also it is necessary to remain familiar with the cases in order to find diversity. Thus, both the qualitative and quantitative approaches do not suit this thesis, as they require many cases to be analysed, which is beyond the scope of the thesis and would also reduce the familiarity between cases. Finally, there is also the statistical approach whereby the “conceptual (mathematical) manipulation of empirically observed data” is used “in order to discover controlled relationships among variables”.⁷⁸ This method involves dealing with a large number of cases which can lead to “vague and amorphous conceptualisations”.⁷⁹ Since this thesis will deal with a limited number of cases, this approach will not be used.

Unlike the qualitative approach, explaining case studies allows the examination of diversity, as well as similarities: study of patterns of similarities and differences within a given set of cases.⁸⁰ However, within the comparative methodological approaches, structured focus comparison seems to suit the thesis the best. This is because according to the structured focused comparison approach, “the comparative analysis of cases is both structured and focused-focused because it deals selectively with only certain aspects of historical case and structured because it

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ A. Lipjhart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”, in The American Political Science Review, September 1971, Vol. 65, No. 3, p684.

⁷⁹ G Satori, “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics”, in The American Political Science Review, Vol. LXIV, NO. 4, p1033.

⁸⁰ Ragin, op.cit. p106.

employs general questions to guide the data collection and analysis in the historical cases".⁸¹ Thus, this method will contribute to hypothesis building.

Thus, the chosen methodology of research for this thesis is the 'structured focus comparison' approach, which was first developed by Alexander L. George in 1979.

This methodology provides structure through explicit definitions of key terms, provides focus by selecting a set of hypotheses to consider and provides comparison through a set of case studies, with the intention of discovering causal patterns⁸²

Within this thesis the methodology will provide a structure through explicit definition of key terms used, such as political assassinations. It is necessary to correctly categorise what is meant by a political assassination. Furthermore, the thesis will try to analyse whether political assassinations can be justified by the typology of justifications offered in the thesis. In other words, the case studies analysed in this thesis will be tested against the classification of a political assassination and justifications offered for a political assassination. There are a number of competing methodological approaches. Aside from the structured focused comparison, there are the qualitative, quantitative and statistical

⁸¹ Alexandra George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison", edited by Lawier in *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979) p61-62.

⁸² Eric Herring, *Danger and Opportunity Explaining International Crisis Outcomes*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) p4.

approaches. All four approaches will be briefly explained in order to establish which method is best suited for this thesis.

The concept of theory development that George discusses in his article is very interesting, as this is important in order to arrive at the right conclusions. One the first things Alexander George explains in his article is that “the task is to convert lessons of history into a comprehensive theory that encompasses the complexity of the phenomenon or activity in question”.⁸³ It is important to learn from lessons in history in order to develop a theory which would

attempt to absorb the “lessons” of a variety of historical cases within a single comprehensive analytical framework; it is the task of theory to identify the many conditions and variables that affect historical outcomes and to sort out the casual patterns associated with different historical outcomes. By doing so, theory accounts for the variance in historical outcomes; it clarifies the apparent inconsistencies and contradictions among the “lessons” of different cases by identifying the critical conditions and variables that differed from one case to the other⁸⁴

⁸³ Ibid. p43.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p44.

This thesis attempts to do just that with political assassinations. The attempt is to absorb lessons from political assassinations in history and use the methodology to identify the common variables between different political assassinations. This thesis will also use the methodology to identify the differences in the various political assassinations examined. One cannot forget that forms of theory development do suffer from problems and “many scientists now believe that a variety of methods, qualitative as well as quantitative, must be employed in developing knowledge and theory”.⁸⁵ It is argued by scientists today that it better to group similar events in order to develop scientific generalisations and laws. However, “historians can offer the objection that to take an instance of a certain type of phenomenon out of its individual historical context may well distort explanation and understanding of the single case”.⁸⁶ Many historians believe that it would also lead to false generalisations. Furthermore, “the recognition that even unique cases can contribute to theory development strengthens, of course, the linkage between history and political science”.⁸⁷

One of the main aspects of the controlled comparison method is that it deals with too few cases. Therefore, “the controlled comparison method encounters certain problems having to do with the fact that while the investigator is interested in many variables has only a few cases”⁸⁸ with which to work. However, as Lijphart points out “intensive analysis of a few cases may be more rewarding than a more superficial statistical

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p44.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p45.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p47.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p49.

analysis of many cases”.⁸⁹ This is the aim of the thesis in which only three cases are analysed with the aim of formulating generalisations regarding the phenomenon.

George notes that there must be prerequisites for single case studies or controlled comparisons to contribute to theory development. He states it is necessary to first “employ the “disciplined-configurative” mode of analysis”.⁹⁰ This means that the types of cases that are chosen should have general similarities for the purposes of description and explanation. The next prerequisite “is that the investigator define adequately the “class” of events/phenomenon for which he is attempting to develop explanatory theory”.⁹¹ This will enable the investigator to identify the events and help concentrate on the issue. “A third prerequisite is that the investigator be selective and focused in his treatment of a case,”⁹² and thereby the investigator can choose cases from which he/she can deduce the theoretical relevance.

Furthermore, George mentions that three phases are involved in any study. These phase are:

Phase 1 is the design and structure of the study are formulated. In Phase 2 the individual case studies are carried out in accord with the design. In Phase 3 the investigator draws upon results of the case

⁸⁹ Ibid. p50.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

studies in order to assess, reformulate, or elaborate
the initial theory stated in Phase 1 ⁹³

According to George, five tasks are involved in the first phase. The first task is to establish the research problems and objectives of the study. In this thesis the objective of the study is to develop a typology of political assassinations. There are a number of existing theories to be examined and specific aspects are analysed in further detail. The second task involves identifying the conditions and variables to be examined in the structured comparison. In this thesis, one of the main conditions to be analysed is whether or not political assassinations are justified. The third task entails choosing appropriate cases for the study.⁹⁴ For example, the case studies in this thesis were chosen because they all took place in very different cultures. The fourth task is the identification of “casual patterns between various outcomes of the dependent variable and various configurations of independent and intervening variables”.⁹⁵ Finally, the fifth task involves the recognition of general questions which are to be asked in the study, which in the case of this thesis will entail defining political assassination and finding any justification behind political assassinations.

Phase 2 involves examining the case studies, in accordance with requirements set out in task 5. In this thesis, case studies will thus aim to answer the general questions set out in the beginning. Phase 3 involves

⁹³ *Ibid.* p54.

⁹⁴ “appropriate in the light of specifications made in tasks 1 and 2”. George, *Ibid.* p55.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p55.

“drawing the theoretical implications of the case studies”. The main points of the case studies are examined to establish the casual patterns that may appear. As the cases under analysis are from various cultures the aim is to find the casual patterns that may exist from case to case.

For George, controlled comparison creates a “rich, differentiated theory”.⁹⁶ Paul Diesing says, “controlled comparison is particularly suited for developing typological theory”.⁹⁷ The controlled comparison is well suited for classifying political assassinations, as a “variety of different causal patterns” can be identified along with “the conditions under which each distinctive type of causal pattern occurs”.⁹⁸ This would enable a better understanding of each of the cases of political assassination under study, as well as for other instances of assassinations. Finally, George states that “using a standardized set of questions in the controlled comparisons is necessary to assure acquisition of comparable data from the several cases”.⁹⁹ Thus, the aim is that by asking standardised questions the cases will reveal similarities among them.

After a brief discussion of the comparative approach it is important to remember that the aim of the approach is to identify diversities present in all of the cases. It should be noted that “comparative researchers usually initiate their research with a specific set of cases in mind.”¹⁰⁰ This is to ensure that the cases selected fit perfectly within the study and are of interest to a wide range of audience. However, “it is important, for the cases selected to be comparable and to share

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p59.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p60.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p62.

¹⁰⁰ Ragin, *op.cit.* 113.

membership in a meaningful, empirically defined category”.¹⁰¹ This thesis will analyse the political assassinations of Anwar Sadat, Yitzhak Rabin and Rajiv Gandhi. All three were from different countries, and they all practised different religions: Islam, Judaism and Hinduism respectively. The diversity of the cases might also serve to highlight similarities that may arise between the three case studies. Comparative research is “well suited for the exploring of exploring diversity, interpreting cultural or historical significance, and advancing theory”.¹⁰² And it is for this reason that the approach is adopted here. Another strategy “is to categorize cases according to their different outcomes”.¹⁰³ Within the context of this thesis, it is assumed that once the cases are analysed there will be a diverse range of conclusions. Thus, “this focus on circumscribed categories makes the comparative strategy well suited for the goal of interpreting historically or culturally significant phenomenon, especially when there is a moderate number of cases”.¹⁰⁴ Yet again it can be concluded that the comparative approach is the best one to use for this research as it illustrates the differences and similarities that exist between the cases examined in this thesis. Finally, the reason for limiting the number of cases is to allow for diversity in analysis, yet to make sure that the analysis does not get uncontrolled. Three cases will allow the results to be varied yet controlled. Apart from the above - mentioned reasons for choosing this approach, there are “several basic features of the comparative approach make it a good strategy for

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p113.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p108.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p109.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p110.

advancing theory". These include: "its use of flexible frames, its explicit focus on the causes of diversity, and its emphasis on the systematic analysis of similarities and differences in the effort to specify how diversity is patterned".¹⁰⁵

Within a comparative framework there is always a specific analytical frame, which for this thesis is the classification of a political assassination. However, there are a number of other research questions in addition to the three hypotheses which will be examined in this thesis. For example, what are political assassinations? Can political assassinations be justified? These questions can be answered, "by altering initial frames in response to evidence": comparative research "refines" and "expands" ideas and "theoretical perspectives" already in use.¹⁰⁶

Having addressed all the reasons which make this approach the most suitable to use for this research it is important to realise that the comparative approach also has a few negative points. Przeworski and Teune state: "Although the number of differences among similar countries is limited, it will almost invariably be sufficiently large to over determine the dependent phenomenon"¹⁰⁷

This implies that although the cases of political assassinations which will be analysed in this thesis will have limited differences, the differences will still be large enough to outclass any large similarity. "Second, the comparative method is said to lead to no more than partial

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p111.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p112.

¹⁰⁷ Arend, *op.cit.* p172.

generalisation, while the real need is to fashion generalisation of universal scope and validity".¹⁰⁸ This is true, but the fact remains that limited comparative research offers a starting point for partial generalisations which can be stepping stones to wider generalisations. "A third criticism, related to the first one, is formulated by Holt and Turner. They argue that closely comparable cases are so rare that the research site is likely to dictate the hypothesis..."¹⁰⁹ Holt and Turner are correct in saying that it is difficult to find comparable cases. This means that a researcher will try to find cases which would prove the hypothesis. However, this is not just a problem with the comparative method as it is possible for the researcher to choose cases which may suit the hypothesis using other methods as well. Although it is possible that the researcher could acknowledge this and prevent the hypothesis dictating the research site, this is being fairly optimistic. Additionally, the comparative approach is considered very similar to the statistical approach. This is because this method also involves asking standardised, general questions of each case. Furthermore, it involves uncovering controlled relations, for instance, similarities and differences amongst cases. The main difference between the two approaches is that the statistical method uses a large number of cases compared to the comparative method where the numbers of cases used are small.

Finally, while examining methodology it is important to point out the difficulties that were faced in conducting the research. In most of the cases examined in this thesis it was difficult or impossible to carry out

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p172-173.

research with the assassins, because they were either in prison, dead, or they would deny any involvement. As a result all my research had to be restricted to secondary sources. Furthermore, it was difficult to find enough relevant material on political assassinations that had already been carried out. Therefore, once again the research had to rely on secondary material. However, carrying out the research was not compromised in anyway and it was possible to analyse the cases properly, given the difficulties that were faced.

Thesis Structure

Chapter One will explore the variety of definitions and concepts of political assassinations found in past and contemporary literature in the field. There is some perplexity as to the precise definition of political assassination. This chapter analyses the different classifications of assassinations put forward by different scholars. Critical examinations of these classifications will establish whether or not these classifications can truly be referred to as political assassinations, or if they are other forms of killing. An effort is made also to define what is meant by an 'assassination event'. There has been much debate regarding the definition of the actual assassination process. Therefore, it is necessary to define the process within the thesis and distinguish it from other types of killing. Tyrannicide, for example, is a concept with which assassinations have been historically associated. This makes it necessary to properly understand what is understood by the concept of tyrannicide. The thesis

seeks to determine also what is meant by terrorism, in order to make a clear distinction between political assassination and terrorism. Terrorist organisations commit political assassinations to achieve their political objectives but individuals also commit assassinations for political or personal reasons. The fact that political assassinations have been used by terrorist groups as a tactic is evident from the examples cited in the historical section above. For years, since scholars have found it difficult to put forward an exact definition of terrorism, this has created confusion. The primary intention in this chapter will be to clarify how political assassinations have factors that distinguish them from terrorism. It is important also to consider the overlapping features between the two. Thus, this section will entail the examination of key characteristics of terrorism.

Chapter Two will analyse the various justifications that can be found for political assassinations. The main theme throughout this chapter is to find out whether political assassinations can be justified. Thus, an attempt will be made to analyse the moral arguments behind committing political assassinations by trying to find a typology of justifications that can be offered for political assassinations. This will include analysing the different approaches which help to examine the justifications for war which may be applied to political assassinations. The chapter examines three categories of justifications: the instrumental justification, moral justification and terroristic justification.

Chapter Three is the first case study, which will analyse the assassination of Anwar Sadat. Chapter Four is the second case study,

which will analyse the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, and Chapter Five is the final case study which will be the analysis of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. The first half of each of the case studies will discuss the history behind the cases, the immediate causes behind the cases such as political, religious and economic reasons, the actual assassination event and the consequences of the assassination. The second half of the chapter will analyse the cases by trying to answer the three following questions:

- Can the assassinations analysed in the thesis be categorised as political assassinations?
- Can the justifications that are analysed within the thesis offer justifications for these political assassinations?
- Are political assassinations only successful as existential acts?

Furthermore, this thesis will then briefly examine the assassinations regime. This chapter will try to lay out the current position of the prohibitions that exist on assassinations. All the international agreements on the assassination regime will be analysed by considering the positive and negative aspects of each agreement. Finally, the chapter will state the implications of weakening and strengthening the regime.

In conclusion, the thesis will also examine the similarities and differences between the three assassinations, with particular reference to target, ideology and motives and aims. This is important because a proper understanding of the case studies would not be complete without looking at the above variables. The chapter will also describe what the thesis

illustrated and how it was done. Finally, the thesis will briefly look at some of the questions that the international community needs to address in the current climate.

Chapter 1

The Study of Political Assassination

Political murder is basically different from other murders
both in its motivation and in its consequences¹¹⁰

The study of political assassination has always been quite restricted. In fact, the work done in this field is limited to prominent names such as David C. Rapoport's Assassination and Terrorism¹¹¹, Murray Clark Havens, Carl Leiden and Karl M. Schmitt's The Politics of Assassinations¹¹², James F. Kirkham, Sheldon G. Levy, William J. Crotty's Assassination and Political Violence¹¹³ and Franklin Ford's, Political Murder¹¹⁴. Why is the study of political assassination so restricted? Political assassinations, successful and attempted, often become the centre of global attention. Certain countries are not considered to be politically, economically and geographically important enough to make an impact on the world stage and do not attract attention of the same intensity that a political assassination elsewhere might. For example, the political assassination of Melchior Ndadaye, President of Burundi, did not attract much world attention as the political role of Burundi in the global arena is not as significant as, for example, the President of the United States. The political assassination of Rabin

¹¹⁰ Edelman and Simon, *op.cit.* p199.

¹¹¹ David C. Rapoport, Assassination and Terrorism (Toronto: T.H.Best Printing Company Ltd, 1971)

¹¹² Murray Clark Havens, Carl Leiden, Karl M. Schmitt, The Politics of Assassinations (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970)

¹¹³ James F. Kirkham, Sheldon G. Levy, William J. Crotty's Assassination and Political Violence. A report to the National Commission on the causes and prevention of violence (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970)

¹¹⁴ Franklin L Ford, Political Murder. From Tyrannicide to Terrorism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1985)

attracted much more attention because the Middle East has been a centre of political turmoil and a focus of the world media for a long time. Although some political assassinations attract less attention, most political assassinations draw attention on the same level of other episodes of political violence or natural disasters. Political assassinations are important events, yet scholars have not shown a great deal of interest in promoting research in the field. This is in stark contrast to the amount of academic attention lavished upon terrorism. Political assassinations are often considered to be just another sub-field of terrorism which does not warrant separate study. Furthermore, studies of political assassinations are restricted by this lack of literature, which serves as a big disincentive for further research. This thesis tries to move beyond these limited parameters. It would be impossible, however, to research all aspects of political assassinations. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer very specific questions about political assassinations.

As Ward Thomas has observed “the issue of international assassination has surfaced with striking frequency”¹¹⁵ in world history. Political assassination is often one of the tactics used by terrorist groups to achieve their goals. But individuals acting on their own who have no connection with any group, guerrilla groups and hired killers have also committed political assassinations. Therefore, it is not correct to assume that political assassinations are only committed by terrorists.¹¹⁶ Whether it is effective as a political tactic is a matter of debate which this thesis will try to clarify. It is interesting to note, as Feierabend et al. state, that “assassination, no matter how narrowly or broadly conceived, belongs among a

¹¹⁵ Ward Thomas, “Norms and security, The case of International Assassination”, in International Security Vol. 25, No.1. Summer 2000. p105.

¹¹⁶ Thereby distinguishing between political assassination and terrorism.

larger class of politically aggressive and violent behaviour".¹¹⁷ Since assassinations are considered to be a sub-group of political violence they exist within two universes of aggressive behaviours. The first universe refers to severe incidents of internal conflict and lesser acts of political aggression. This includes elections, vacation of office, strikes, significant change of laws, arrests of insignificant persons, assassination, execution of insignificant persons, terrorism, sabotage and civil war to mention a few.¹¹⁸ These activities all experience a degree of political aggression. The second universe refers to more violent acts of political aggression. This includes riots and demonstrations, boycotts, repressive action against specific groups, sabotage, revolts, assassination, execution and so on.¹¹⁹¹²⁰

Another type of political assassination which needs to be briefly mentioned is the assassination of a political figure of one country by a political figure of another country. This can also be referred to as state-sponsored political assassination. The political figure could be either a governmental figure or a person who has acquired eminence by being politically active. This is not researched within this thesis, but this type of killing cannot be ignored, especially in light of recent events. The United States' desire for a regime change in Iraq by ousting Saddam Hussein has raised the question of targeted killing of a head of government. According to international law, however, it is illegal for one country to politically assassinate the political leader of another country. Indeed the United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution called the 'Convention on the

¹¹⁷ Ivo K Feierabend, Rosalind L Feierabend, Betty A Nesvold and Franz M Jagger, "Political Violence and Assassination: A Cross-National Assessment", edited by William Crotty in Assassination and Political Violence: A Staff Report. (Washington: Government Printing Press, 1969) p82.

¹¹⁸ For further examples see Crotty op.cit. p82.

¹¹⁹ For further examples see Crotty op.cit. p83.

¹²⁰ It should be noted that the term assassination comes up in both universes because it is possible to carry out an act of assassination under each circumstance. This signifies that aggression of any type can motivate the act of assassination.

Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents 3166 (XXVIII)' on 5th February, 1974.¹²¹ The convention is clear about the protection offered to diplomatic persons and therefore any attack on such persons will be considered illegal. Furthermore, in the United States an executive order was passed in 1976 according to which "no person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in assassination".¹²² Before this executive order was passed "the United States supported a small number of plots to kill foreign leaders".¹²³ It is therefore important to remember that assassination committed by a state is also a political assassinations however, in most cases this type of assassination gains legitimacy because the state is a legitimate actor in the international system. This creates further confusion with the concept of political assassinations as it seems to confer legitimacy if carried out by a state actor as opposed to a non - state actor. It is important to remember that under both circumstances carrying out an act of assassination is unjustifiable. As a result of such complexities it is essential to understand the concept of political assassinations. However, this issue will be tackled only briefly within the thesis as it is not the focus of the thesis.

The 1975 National Commission on Assassination and Political Violence by the United States gave a list of a number of categories of assassination, which they state as:

¹²¹ Robert A. Friedlander, Terrorism Documents of International and Local Control, Volume 1, New York: Oceana Publications, 1979. p499. The complete details of the convention can be found from pages 499-506.

¹²² Boyd M Johnson, "Executive Order 12,333: The Permissibility of an American Assassination of Foreign Leader", in Cornell International Law Journal, Volume 25, 1992. p403.

¹²³ Ibid. p402.

1. assassination by one political elite to replace without effecting any systemic or ideological change;
2. assassination for the purpose of terrorising and destroying the legitimacy of the ruling elite in order to effect substantial systemic or ideological change:
3. assassination by the government in power to suppress political challenge
4. assassination to propagandise a political and ideological point of view; or
5. assassination unconnected with rational political goals which satisfies only the pathological needs of the mentally disturbed attacker.¹²⁴

Political assassinations do not strictly fit into of any the five categories. However, the most accurate classification with regard to this thesis is the second category as it ties in with the three main elements, which are political motive, political figure and political consequence, required for an assassination to be categorised as a political assassination. Although the second category does not state clearly the importance of a political figure it is safe to assume that the only way to achieve substantial systemic or ideological change is if a prominent political figure is assassinated.

¹²⁴ Kevin O'Brien, "The Use of Assassination as a Tool of State Policy: South Africa's Counter-Revolutionary Strategy 1979-1992 (Part I)", in Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 10, Summer 1998, Number 2. p89.

Definitions

Definitional clarity is crucial in research. The significance of correctly defined terms therefore cannot be underestimated. A broad range of definitions of the term 'assassination' have been put forward by various scholars, fuelling confusion as to the distinction between assassination, murder, and terrorism. Due to the large number of definitions, it is essential to fully understand terms and concepts which are going to be analysed or play a key role in the research.

As Kevin O'Brien has argued, "Assassination is a generic term which has come to be commonly applied [very loosely in many cases, it must be added] to any politically-related killing; it is clear that a narrower definition must be found".¹²⁵ It is possible to define assassination in both narrow and broad terms. For example, an assassination can narrowly refer to a successful killing of a prominent political figure. In broader terms, "assassination" could include successful or unsuccessful, attempted or unattempted assassinations, assassination threats, assassination events, assassinations of prominent political figures or lesser known political figures like ministers, judges, generals etc, who have an important role in the political arena. Moreover, as Paul Wilkinson has stated, "the term murder or political murder is often used interchangeably with assassination".¹²⁶ This is often misleading. As a result, this thesis will use a more precise definition of assassination excluding most forms of murder. Murders committed for monetary reasons for example, or by psychopaths, and assassinations consented to by governments or committed through rage or passion remain in the realm of ordinary

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* p87-88.

¹²⁶ Paul Wilkinson, *Political Terrorists Always Resort to Political Murder*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1974) p4.

murder, as they are performed for personal as opposed to political (or here, religious and political) reasons.¹²⁷ Although assassinations committed by the government are political assassinations, this thesis will concentrate on non-state actors who assassinate political actors. Similarly, political assassination should not be confused with politically - motivated murder, which entails mass killings and genocide.

It is also important to bear in mind that confusion exists on the role of the state using political assassination as a weapon. This leads to the blurring of the distinction between the use of force by state and non-state actors. After September 11th 2001, the United States has revoked its ban on killing any political figure on the basis that if there is any chance that the United States could be under threat in any form, then they can assassinate in order to protect themselves. As a result, carrying out an assassination as a state actor seems to be permissible and a legitimate act. Whereas if the same act were carried out by a non - state actor for example, a terrorist group, then the act becomes illegitimate. This demonstrates the blurring of the issue of the distinction between state and non-state actors and the legitimate uses of force. Although this area is not the main argument within the thesis it is important to point out the issue before going any further.

Assassination

Austin Turk defines an assassination as "a politically motivated killing in which victims are selected because of the expected political impact of their dying".¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, edited by H.W.Fowler and F.G. Fowler. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) p64.

¹²⁸ Austin Turk, 'Assassination' edited by Sanford H. Kadish in Encyclopaedia of Crime and Justice. (New York: Free Press, 1982) p83.

Turk's definition overlooks the political consequences of an assassination. As a result, this definition by Turk can be seen as not representing a precise definition of a political assassination. Wilkinson emphasises that an assassination is "a politically motivated act of killing aimed at a prominent political person".¹²⁹ Here again, the definition seems not to address the question of political purpose. Wilkinson states that the assassination of a person would have political motives behind it and would have to involve a political figure but he does not mention the need for the assassination to have political repercussions. It seems that Turk, along with Wilkinson, confuse the two issues of political motive and political purposes. Nachman Ben Yehuda defines political assassination as

a form of violent and aggressive human behaviour, focused on taking somebody else's life against that person's wish to achieve a political goal, behaviour akin to murder, killing, blood-revenge, execution and the like.¹³⁰

Yehuda's definition makes no mention of the fact that the assassination should be targeted at a prominent political figure. There does not seem to be much point assassinating a person with no political importance, as this would not result in any political impact. This is essential for a political assassination. It would not otherwise achieve the desired political purpose. It is important to have a political motive for committing a political assassination, however, Yehuda's definition seems to ignore the importance of a political motive behind a political assassination. Once again it makes us wonder whether there is fine line between

¹²⁹ Wilkinson, 'Political Terrorists' *op.cit.* p6.

¹³⁰ Nachman Ben Yehuda, "Political assassination as Rhetorical Devices: Events and Interpretations", in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.2 No.3 August 1997 p324.

political motive and political purpose, or do some scholars confuse the two issues? Saul K. Padover defines assassination as, "the trucidation of a political figure without due process of law".¹³¹ This definition by Padover seems to completely miss what constitutes a political assassination which requires a political motive, political goal and a prominent political figure. One important point which he does make in his definition occurs that an assassination is without due process of law.

Yehuda has put forward a working definition of a political assassination whereby:

political assassination or execution is a rhetorical device which is used socially to construct and interpret (that is, to make a culturally meaningful account of) the discriminate, deliberate, intentional, and serious attempt(s), whether successful or not, to kill a specific social actor for political reasons having something to do with the political position or role of the victim, his symbolic –moral universe, and with the symbolic-moral universe out of which the assassin/s acts(s). This universe generates the legitimacy and justifications required for the act, which are usually presented in quasi-legal terms. However, decisions to assassinate are typically not the result of a fair legal procedure, based on 'due process'.¹³²

¹³¹ Saul K Padover, "Patterns of Assassination in Occupied Territory", in The Public Opinion Quarterly, Winter, 1943. p680.

¹³² Yehuda, "Political Assassinations as Rhetorical Devices", op.cit. p333-334.

In this particular definition, rhetorical deviance is explained as a term used specifically to describe a particular act of killing. It enables one to extract a cultural meaning, that is "the term 'rhetorical device' enables us to keep some distance from the event itself and yet give room for a real and indigenous cultural interpretation".¹³³ The definition explains that political assassinations are deliberate, carefully planned, and have a specific target. He does state that the target is chosen for political reasons but does not stress the importance of the target being a prominent political person. The impact of an assassination of a prominent political figure, for example, heads of state, or members of parliament, would be greater than if a less - well known political figure was involved. In certain cases, there are assassination attempts on lesser known political figures but in such cases there is no immediate political goal that needs to be achieved. It may succeed in so far as it draws attention to a particular cause. Also, the importance of prominent figures is vital, "since the killing of lesser members of the political community is included within a wider category of internal political turmoil, namely terrorism".¹³⁴ Thus, this stresses the distinction between assassinating a prominent person and lesser - known political figure, as the political impact of the former would be greater. As a result, assassinating a less - prominent figure would fall into a broader category. Finally, it is also important that the target is a prominent political figure, because only then would the assassination have any important political impact. At the very least the political assassination should be able to draw public attention to the cause.

In defining political assassination, Yehuda elucidates the importance of power and morality. This is very significant because concepts like power and

¹³³ *Ibid.* p334.

¹³⁴ Kirkham, Levy, Crotty, *op.cit.* p56.

morality are rarely explicit in definitions of political assassinations. Nevertheless, it is generally the case that power is a primary motive behind any form of political violence, including political assassinations. To bring in the moral arguments while defining the concept adds to further confusion as the aim of defining terms is to understand them and bringing in moral issues results in mixing two different ideas. In other words, the moral side of political violence should be dealt with separately, so that it can be understood well and in the right context. Additionally, there are a few apparent criticisms. One is how hired assassins fit into the definition. It also does not specify who may be responsible for the killing.

Murray C. Havens, Carl Leiden and Karl M. Schmitt suggest "that assassination refers to the deliberate, extralegal killing of an individual for political purposes".¹³⁵ There are two problems with this definition. First, it does not mention political motives as an important element of a political assassination. Secondly, the definition maintains that an assassination carried out on any individual is an assassination but this cannot be termed a political assassination if the individual is not a political figure.

Franklin L. Ford defines an assassination as "the intentional killing of a specified victim or group of victims, perpetrated for reasons related to his (her, his) public prominence and undertaken with a political purpose in mind".¹³⁶ This definition ignores the political motives which may instigate the assassination.

Max Lerner claims that

assassination refers to those killings or murders, usually
directed against individuals in public life, motivated by

¹³⁵ Havens Leiden Schmitt, *op.cit.* p4.

¹³⁶ Ford, *op.cit.* p2.

political rather than by personal relationships...Assassination is the deliberate, extralegal killing of an individual for political purpose.¹³⁷

This definition seems to be quite close to what a political assassination is. The definition clearly states first, that there should be a political motive behind a political assassination. Second, it states that the assassination should be directed against individuals in public life. Finally it says that assassinations are not legal acts. This definition contains all the elements needed to classify a killing as a political assassination.

For example, the politically - motivated killings of people of little importance, the killing of a king in an accident, or the murder of a politician by a thief cannot be categorised as political assassinations because they all lack the required motivations. Although the last example may have political consequences it cannot be categorised as a political assassination. The possible targets of political assassinations would thereby include heads and former heads of states, presidential candidates, judges, ambassadors, governors, cabinet ministers, military figures, generals and so on.¹³⁸ These people are all prominent political figures, and there would have to be a political motive behind killing them, thus resulting in a potential political impact. Lerner's definition will be adopted for the purposes of this thesis.

These are a few of the definitions of assassination that have been examined by scholars. Each definition that has been cited is not precise enough and thereby presents a flaw. However, it is important and interesting to note that all the above

¹³⁷ Max Lerner, 'Assassination', edited by Edwin Seligman in Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan, 1930.

¹³⁸ For further information see Feierabend, Feierabend, Nesvold and Jagger, op.cit. p57-58.

mentioned definitions of assassination clearly point out that the political dimension, or motive, is central to the planning and execution of an assassination. In other words, "Most assassinations are politically motivated and can never be separated from the political context in which they occur; their impact, public and systemic, is political".¹³⁹ Thus, the definition of political assassination used in this thesis will emphasise the political motives underpinning the deliberate killing of a particular individual, usually a prominent figure in society, with a political purpose.

Kirkham, Levy and Crotty have pointed out three significant separate elements that are woven into the concept of an assassination. It is these three factors that distinguish a political assassination from ordinary murder. These factors are:

- (1) a target that is a prominent political figure;
- (2) a political motive for the killing;
- (3) the potential political impact of the death or escape from death, as the case may be.¹⁴⁰

It is, however, stated by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty that all political assassinations contain, to a greater or lesser extent, all three elements and that it is not necessary for all three factors to be responsible. They maintain that "all three elements, however, do not necessarily coexist".¹⁴¹ By contrast, this thesis argues that in the case of a political assassination, it is essential for all three factors to be present. If that is not the case then the killing cannot be categorised as a political

¹³⁹ Havens, Leiden, Schmitt, *op.cit.* p3.

¹⁴⁰ Kirkham, Levy, Crotty, *op.cit.* p1.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p1.

assassination. It would still be debateable whether a murder that contains any one of the factors is a political assassination or not. However, in this thesis for a murder to be classified as a political assassination it would have to involve all three factors, as only when these three factors come together do we witness a political assassination.

Thus, the most important aspect that comes to the forefront after analysing all the definitions pertaining to political assassinations is that concept of political assassination is a contested issue. It is therefore difficult to nail one definition as being the best. One must analyse all the definitions as they all contain certain good points. Therefore, to pinpoint the perfect definition would be impossible.

Assassination Event

It is essential to understand the various components of a political assassination if we are to understand the phenomenon of political assassination. As a result it is important to understand the process behind a political assassination, because it is a separate issue from the assassination itself. This is referred to by the specific term "assassination event". Feierabend et al. define an assassination event "as an act that consists of a plotted, attempted, or actual murder of a prominent political figure (elite) by an individual (assassin) who performs this act in other than a governmental role"¹⁴². In other words, the term "political assassination event thus refers to an attempt to take someone's life against his wish"¹⁴³. It is important to remember that the target has to be a significant political person as the impact of the assassination would then be far greater than if it were any lesser - known political figure. Also as mentioned killing of, any lesser members of the political

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p56.

¹⁴³ Yehuda, 'Political Assassinations as a Rhetorical Device', *op.cit.* p333

community would be included within the definition of internal political turmoil, which basically refers to terrorism.¹⁴⁴ This is indispensable to understand the whole process of a political assassination irrespective of the actual assassination. That is not to say that one should ignore factors which might have influenced it. Kirkham et al. regard it as necessary to define what is meant by 'an event' for two reasons. The first reason is, "...it demarcates the act from its cultural interpretation. Second, along the way, an important distinction is made between executions and assassinations".¹⁴⁵ This implies first that an act of political assassination is an individual act, thus making it easier for the purpose of analysis. Secondly, the definition clearly distinguishes between an assassination committed by an individual or group who have no ties with the state, and by individuals or groups hired by the state to carry out assassinations (in other words, state - sponsored assassinations).

In addition to defining what is meant by an 'assassination event' this definition makes a clear distinction between a political execution and an assassination. It is, therefore, essential to define what is meant by an execution. "An execution may be regarded as a political killing, but it is initiated by the organs of the state, while an assassination can always be characterised as an illegal act".¹⁴⁶ However, execution is not included within the parameters of this thesis. This is because an execution is strictly an act committed by a government with a legal basis.

¹⁴⁴ For further reference see Crotty *op.cit.* p56.

¹⁴⁵ Yehuda, 'Political Assassinations as a Rhetorical Device', *op.cit.* p333.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Classification of political assassinations

There have been attempts by various scholars to classify assassinations in order to simplify their study. These classifications help us to understand the various possible ways of classifying assassinations, and which murders can be identified as political assassinations.

Kirkham, Levy and Crotty outline five types of assassinations:

- *Elite substitution* - the assassination of a political leader without a major systemic or ideological change visualised. This type typically refers to a power struggle when a particular leader is assassinated in order to replace him/her or those he/she represents in power with an opposing group at the same level.
- *Tyrannicide* - the assassination of a despot in order to replace him with a better, usually less oppressive, more rational ruler; this is one of the oldest forms of assassination, one which has inspired many moral and philosophical justifications.
- *Terroristic assassination* - assassination on a mass and indiscriminate basis in order to demonstrate the government's inability to rule, or to let a minority govern a majority.
- *Anomic assassination* - assassination of a political figure for private reasons. A common example is the lone assassin who uses political rhetoric to justify the act, but appears to demonstrate a psychiatric disorder.

- *Propaganda by deed* - assassination which aims to direct attention to a specific problem.¹⁴⁷

All of the above classifications are based on motivation, which makes this the most appropriate classification. It is by no means the best classification. A political assassination requires the three characteristics which have been mentioned earlier in the chapter. What would have improved the classification would be if elite substitution would actually imply the assassination of a political leader with a major systemic or ideological change visualised, and if terroristic assassination implied the deliberate killing of people.

In this thesis political assassination is considered to involve an integration of specific aspects of elite substitution, tyrannicide and propaganda by deed. Elite substitution would require the assassination to be directed against a political figure with at least an attempt at instituting systemic and ideological change. Political assassination is definitely indicative of a power struggle to replace the individual in power. However, this replacement does not necessarily mean the substitution of a similarly ranked individual in an opposing group. Political assassination does not necessarily imply the replacement of a person, since a case may arise when a leader is assassinated without there being a replacement in mind. If the assassination takes place with a replacement in mind, this indicates the assassin hopes the replacement will be a better leader. As a result, this is linked to tyrannicide, as the political leader could be a despot who will be replaced by a better, rational and less oppressive individual. Finally, propaganda by deed is important because a political assassination is targeted towards a

¹⁴⁷ All the following points are taken from Nachman Ben Yehuda article Political Assassinations as Rhetorical Devices: Events and Interpretations.p343.

particular individual who represents or pursues specific political issues, which are not considered legitimate. This is one of the best classifications of political assassinations that can be found. Thus, particular aspects of the above three characteristics are needed for a proper explanation of an assassination.

Nachmen Ben Yehuda classifies political assassinations on the basis of assassination events. He puts forward four categories of political assassination events. They are as follows:

- First is the pre planning of a political assassination. This implies that the entire event has been contemplated but has not been planned.
- Second is planning whereby the assassination has been planned but no attempt has been made to actually commit the assassination.
- Third is an unsuccessful assassination. The event was contemplated and there was a plan but the assassination was not properly carried out and therefore did not produce desired results.
- The fourth type is a successful assassination. As the name suggests this implies that the victim was killed or wounded as a result of an assassination.¹⁴⁸

This is not in any way a classification of political assassinations. It does prompt the question of how it can contribute to classifying political assassinations. The

¹⁴⁸ Yehuda, 'Political Assassinations as Rhetorical Devices'. op.cit.

above categories can be considered as important and practical divisions of political assassination events. Despite the obvious shortcoming in the classification, it suffers from other problems. The drawback of such a classification seems to be that it does not reveal any other characteristics of assassinations. In other words, elements which need to exist for a murder to be classified as a political assassination, are not stated. This classification illustrates whether an assassination is planned or not, and whether it is successful or unsuccessful. Once again, in no way does this allow an assassination to be termed a political assassination. As a result, it is difficult to classify an assassination as political by the assassination event. Hence, the above classification system is not an accurate and reliable way of classifying political assassinations.

By contrast, Oscar Jaszi classifies political assassinations and other forms of political murder on the basis of motives. These can be identified as the following:

- An assassination committed for personal reasons without any political aims. The primary motivations behind committing such assassinations are jealousy, anger, hatred other personal sentiments. The only political aspect of this type of assassination is that it is targeted against a prominent political figure.
- Murder committed in order to seize power for gratification of power or the advantages with having power.
- The third type is diplomatic assassinations. The removal of dangerous opponents.

- Political murder committed for reasons of state.
- Political murder connected to religious issues and often related to religious fanaticism and the pursuit of power.
- Finally, murder driven by nationalism which is related to a struggle for constitutionalism and republicanism.¹⁴⁹

Jaszi's classification is very interesting, but it is not only a classification of political assassination, but also of political murder. In a sense it confuses the two issues. Political murder includes different types of murders from assassinations to random killing. As has been already established, political assassination is a specific form of murder. All the motives stated by Jaszi are legitimate factors which could promote an assassination and not just a political assassination. Motives could include any of the above, but each case undoubtedly has to have an underlying political motive. That is to say that the motives included above are not all political and this is a necessary aspect of a political assassination. The first category could never comprise a political assassination as a murder committed against a prominent figure for personal reasons cannot be considered a political assassination. This is against the very nature of a political assassination. Similarly, murders committed for gratification of power, diplomatic reasons, reasons of state, religious issues and nationalism do not contain the three essential factors of a political assassination.

Richard B. Laney states that "since assassination is a means to an end and since the ends of politics are legion, there is practically no limit to the different kinds of assassinations if they are classified by motive". Laney accepts Jaszi's

¹⁴⁹ Oscar Jaszi and John D. Lewis, Against the Tyrant (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957) chapter 14, p151-155.

classification but adds his own points to the classification of political assassination. He classifies political assassinations in the following way:

- It firstly depends on the number of assassins. That is whether it is one, a few or many assassins.
- Secondly, whether the intended victim was tyrannical or not.
- Political assassination maybe either 'oligarchic' or 'plebeian', 'dynastic' or 'revolutionary' depending on whether it grows out of a power struggle between small groups of men at the top of the social pyramid or between the top and bottom of the pyramid.
- Political assassinations are also classified on the basis of ideology.
- Political assassinations are committed according to character of people.¹⁵⁰

Laney's first classification is somewhat irrelevant. It really is immaterial how many assassins are involved. It only helps to establish whether the assassin acted on his own or if he was he associated with a group. An assassination cannot be termed a political assassination according to the number of people involved in the act. The number of people does not effect the victim's prominence, the political motive or the political impact. Therefore, in this case, a murder cannot be categorised as a political assassination as it does include the elements which are necessary for a political assassination. Secondly, it does not matter if the victim

¹⁵⁰ Richard B. Laney, Political Assassination: The History of an Idea (Michigan: Microfilm, 1966) p17-19.

was tyrannical or not, because, as far as the assassin was concerned, the victim was tyrannical and therefore had to be killed. Classifying assassinations according to a political system is not important as all political assassinations are about power. As a result, the system under which they were committed is irrelevant. However, a classification based upon ideologies reveals an incredible amount of information about whether the assassination was political or not. Insight is given into the beliefs that the assassin possessed, which might have prompted him to carry out a political assassination. These beliefs could form the political motivation behind a political assassination. The character of a person is completely irrelevant. An assassin's character cannot make an assassination political in nature. For carrying out the act of assassination it does not matter if the assassin is mentally ill or just happens to firmly believe in his ideology.

Finally, James W. Clarke presents a very different type of classification. He has organised assassinations on the basis of types of assassins:

- Type I assassins view their acts as a probable sacrifice of self for a political ideal. They are fully cognisant and accepting of the meaning, implications, and personal consequences of their acts. Inherently personal motives, such as a neurotic need for recognition, are secondary to their primary political purpose.
- Type II assassins are persons with overwhelming and aggressive egocentric needs for acceptance, recognition, and status. There is none of the cognitive distortion associated with psychoses. Emotionally they are characterised by moderately

high levels of reality-based anxiety that exerts a strong influence on their behaviour. Without delusion, they fully appreciate and accept the personal consequences of their acts.

- Type III assassins are psychopaths (or sociopaths) who believe that the condition of their lives is so intolerable, meaningless and without purpose, that destruction of society and themselves is desirable for its own sake.
- Type IV assassins are characterised by severe emotional and cognitive distortion that is expressed in hallucinations and delusion of persecution and/or grandeur. Their contact with reality is so tenuous that they are usually unable to grasp the significance of their actions or understand the response of the others to them.¹⁵¹

Most importantly, assassinations cannot be categorised in terms of the assassins who commit them. As this does not in any way make an assassination political in nature. Thus, only type I can be categorised as involving a political assassination, as the assassination is directed against a prominent political figure and political purpose is the primary motive for committing the act. As far as type II, III and IV are considered, the assassinations are directed towards political figures but the motives are often personal. Furthermore, the assassins in cases II, III and IV are people who are mentally ill or disturbed. As a result, these types do not conform with the three essential factors needed in a political assassination. Therefore, only type I can be considered as a political assassination.

¹⁵¹ James W. Clarke, American Assassins The Darker Side of Politics, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982)

Tyrannicide

“Tyrannicide was a self sacrificing act for public benefit (and so morally esteemed); common assassination, its opposite, namely, a self-serving act for private gain (and correspondingly censured). Terrorist assassinations, though similarly condemned, raise a special problem since they purport to be self denying acts for the public good”.¹⁵²

Rule by tyrants and tyrannicide have been recorded throughout history. The word tyrant originates from the Greek word “turranos” meaning tyrant. A tyrant was a “strongman or dictator who seized the reins of power in a city and controlled its government”.¹⁵³ It can be said that tyrant in those days was seen as a ruler who would govern the country while looking after the interests of the people, so “a tyrant was not necessarily considered to be bad if he exercised his autocratic authority in a manner beneficial for the city”.¹⁵⁴ Thus proving the point in the quotation at the beginning of this section. However, it would appear that since these times, the idea of what a tyrant is has changed. In recent history Anwar Sadat, Yitzhak Rabin and Rajiv Gandhi were considered to be tyrants in the worst sense by a section of the population. The leaders were seen as oppressive towards their people as they were pursuing policies that some considered did not suit the people.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² David George, “Distinguishing Classical Tyrannicide From Modern Terrorism”, in Review of Politics Vol:50, 1988. p390.

¹⁵³ Michael W. Taylor, The Tyrant Slayers. The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C. Athenian Art and Politics (Salem: Ayer Company, Publishers Inc, 1991) p xii

¹⁵⁴ Taylor, op.cit. pxii.

¹⁵⁵ This will be explained in greater detail in the case studies.

One of the first acts of tyrannicide recorded was in Athens in 514 B.C. when Harmodios and Aristogeiton assassinated Hipparchus, the tyrant of Athens. Hipparchus was considered to be the weakest ruler in the Peisistratid tyranny. He was murdered in broad daylight during the Panathenaic Festival. An important point that comes to the forefront is that “both Herodotus and Thucydides our most renowned sources for the historical events of ancient Greece, down play the event, noting that this assassination failed to put an end to tyranny”.¹⁵⁶ During the rule by this dynasty Athens saw a period of peace and stability. It is important to remember that “while Harmodios and Aristogeiton did make an attempt to overthrow the tyranny, the assassination was primarily motivated by a private personal quarrel”.¹⁵⁷ It is questionable, therefore, how self - sacrificing the actors were being and whether the killing can be considered an assassination.

This example shows that, when the people felt that they were being ruled by a tyrant and that living under such conditions were becoming unbearable, they decided to get rid of the tyrant. It can be seen in the historical section discussed in the introduction that most of the assassinations in the past were carried out because the leaders were tyrants. Political assassinations were carried out against tyrants. Keeping in mind the three important concepts of political assassinations : the person, motive, and the consequences, there is a fine line between tyrannicide and a political assassination. This makes it necessary to define what is meant by tyrannicide. According to Ford “if assassination represents only one kind of political murder, tyrannicide denotes more limited still, a circle within a circle within a circle”.¹⁵⁸ From this statement it can be seen that although assassinations and tyrannicide might be very similar, there is a difference between the two. Also,

¹⁵⁶ Taylor, *op.cit.* pxii.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Ford, *op.cit.* p2.

sometimes tyrannicide can be considered as a subcategory of an assassination. This difference needs to be recognised in order to avoid confusion. Tyrannicide is, therefore, a very specific action, the killing of a tyrant in order to put an end to the tyranny. An act of tyrannicide, of course, will not always be successful. In the case of Hipparchus it is clearly seen that the tyrannicide did not put an end to the rule of tyranny.

Niccolo Machiavelli, in his book 'The Prince', interestingly establishes the relation between the Prince and his subjects. Machiavelli states what a Prince must do in order to remain in power:

If the ruler wants to keep hold of his new possessions, he must bear two things in mind: first, that the family of the old prince must be destroyed: next, that he must change neither their laws nor their taxes.¹⁵⁹

This implies that the new rule should be similar to the old rule. With this in mind, parallels may be drawn between the Prince and the contemporary ruler. The lessons that can be drawn are that a contemporary ruler, in order to retain his power, must eliminate political rivals.

Machiavelli also notes the importance of how the Prince should make sure that his people do not hate him, while making "himself feared in such a way that, if he is not loved, at least he escapes being hated".¹⁶⁰ This, it would seem, represents a good Prince.

¹⁵⁹ Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1995) p7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p53.

He will be hated above all if, as I said, he is rapacious and aggressive with regard to the property and the women of his subjects¹⁶¹

In the contemporary world, most rulers do not seem to follow Machiavelli advice. In some cases, rulers introduce policies which may make the people hate them. Rulers manage this hate and it only manifests itself in a minority of the population. As a result, this hate does not effect the ruler in a great way. Furthermore,

He will be despised if he has a reputation for being fickle, frivolous, effeminate, cowardly, irresolute: a prince should avoid this like the plague and strive to demonstrate in his actions grandeur, courage, sobriety, strength.¹⁶²

This seems to apply quite well. Today most rulers seem to realise that the position requires them to possess traits like being strong and having courage and dignity. It is only then that a ruler's power can survive. A ruler "should appear as a man of compassion, a man of good faith, a man of integrity, a kind and a religious man"¹⁶³ to those around him. Machiavelli places immense importance on religion and this can be identified in today's world particularly with respect to the case studies chosen for study. Another important point he makes is "...there are two ways of fighting: by law or by force. The first way is natural to men, and the second to

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p57.

¹⁶² Ibid. p57.

¹⁶³ Ibid. p56.

beasts".¹⁶⁴ He thereby, implies that both options are available to men and that they need to make use of both for best results. Machiavelli states that "there are two things that a prince must fear: internal subversion from his subjects; and external aggression by foreign powers".¹⁶⁵ This last point is something that a contemporary ruler is constantly aware of today. However, it is important to remember that "unlike an ordinary political assassination which is said to be invariably for private benefit, tyrannicide was always supposed to be undertaken by private men *pro bono publico*".¹⁶⁶ It was a public act for private reasons. This does not conform with what constitutes a political assassination as a political assassination cannot be committed for private reasons.

There is one important difference that can be highlighted while analysing tyrannicide and political assassination. Unlike with case in modern political assassination, after an act of tyrannicide was committed, Greek and Roman traditions dictated a celebration of the act. "Honouring tyrannicides (even the unsuccessful) and eulogizing their patriotic deeds has been an enduring and prominent feature in the Western political tradition...".¹⁶⁷ Whereas with a political assassination, the effort has always been to keep the event as quiet as possible.

David George is quite right in pointing out the continuity between tyrannicide and terrorism. He is of the opinion that the phenomenon of tyrannicide made way for terrorism "at some point in the past tyrannicide (the antecedent) ends and terrorism (the consequent) begins".¹⁶⁸ It seems that the distinguishing line between the two events is thin. Where does one separate the two? Tyrannicide was specifically directed towards a figure in power. Whereas, in sharp contrast,

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p54.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p57.

¹⁶⁶ David George, *op.cit.* p391.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p394.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p396.

terrorism is not necessarily specifically targeted against a person in power, and modern terrorism is typically directed towards civilian populations. As there are a number of rulers who can be identified as tyrants, it is still possible to carry out tyrannicide. Modern assassinations directed against rulers may be seen as tyrannicides. However, these contemporary assassins are not considered heroes by the majority of the population. Also, "it is true by definition that a democratic majority can never be a tyranny by usurpation since the only lawful title to power in a democracy is winning at least 51 per cent of the vote".¹⁶⁹ It is quite accurate to say that "Democracy is thus opposed and outbid in the name of a higher democracy, and the right of resistance invoked in terrorist assassination is said to be a "modern version of tyrannicide" when authentic tyrannicide of predemocratic Europe is no longer possible".¹⁷⁰ As a result, the political assassinations analysed within the course of this thesis can account for modern day tyrannicide.

Terrorism

Having illustrated what is meant by assassination, we can now move on to what constitutes terrorism and how political assassinations relate to terrorism. Historically, the term "terrorism" is derived from the *regime de la terreur* which existed in France during the French Revolution. The aim was to annihilate the enemies of the revolution, and to restore order in the anarchical society that followed the uprising of 1789. The *regime de la terreur* "was an instrument of governance wielded by the recently established revolutionary state".¹⁷¹ At this point in time, terrorism was viewed positively by some, as opposed to the negative

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p398.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p 399.

¹⁷¹ Hoffman, 'Inside Terrorism', *op.cit.* p15.

image it has today. It shared, however, two common characteristics with modern day terrorism the first of which was that regime de la terreur was not random nor indiscriminate as terrorism is commonly thought to be today, but was systematic and deliberate. Secondly, its goal and its justification were to create a society just like political terrorism aims to do today. This thesis will define terrorism as "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change".¹⁷²

Defining terrorism has perplexed scholars, from Grant Wardlaw and Paul Wilkinson to Walter Laqueur, for many years. There is no common definition agreed upon by scholars. Terrorism is a term used in very different ways. Paul Wilkinson divides terrorism into four different types – criminal, psychic, war, and political terrorism. These distinctions are very effective, as they help to narrow down the concept of terrorism to political terrorism.¹⁷³ According to Wilkinson, political terrorism is "the systematic use of murder and destruction, and the threat of murder and destruction in order to terrorise individuals, groups, communities or governments into conceding to terrorists demands".¹⁷⁴ The definition does not consider the importance of power involved in terrorist tactics. Also, the definition does not highlight the significance of political goals that are the main part of a terrorist's aim. Grant Wardlaw's definition of political terrorism is

the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger

¹⁷² *Ibid.* p43

¹⁷³ For further reference see Paul Wilkinson, *Political Terrorism* (London: Macmillian, 1974).

¹⁷⁴ Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and Liberal State* (London: Macmillian, 1977) p49.

than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators¹⁷⁵

Wardlaw makes an important point by stating that the use or threat of violence can be for, or in opposition to, an established authority. The use or threat of violence by an established authority is in most cases overlooked. Terrorism is mostly conducted in order to destroy governments. This is seen as the stepping stone towards fulfilling desired goals. Significantly, “a terrorist will shoot somebody even though it is a matter of complete indifference to him whether that person lives or dies.”¹⁷⁶ The idea of fear is an integral part of a terrorists aim:

Terrorism is used in order to create fear; but it is aimed at creating fear in order that the fear, in turn, will lead somebody else – not the terrorist – to embark on some quite different program of action that will accomplish whatever it is that the terrorist really desires¹⁷⁷

More specifically terrorism is about gaining, and the use of, power “to achieve political change”. Terrorism is the use of violence as a means to fulfil a political aim.¹⁷⁸ Characteristics of terrorism are: the use of violence, to inculcate fear, defined political objectives and the objective to make a profound impact on

¹⁷⁵ Grant Wardlaw, Political Terrorism, Theory, tactics, and counter-measures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) p16.

¹⁷⁶ David Fromkin, “The Strategy of Terrorism”, in International Terrorism, characteristics, causes, control edited by Charles W Kegley Jr. (St Martin’s Press, 1990) p60.

¹⁷⁷ David Fromkin, op.cit. 60.

¹⁷⁸ Hoffman, ‘Inside Terrorism’, op.cit. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1998) p14.

society.¹⁷⁹ Over the years, terrorism has changed with respect to tactics, targets which makes it difficult to identify a set of people as terrorists. In the traditional sense, terrorism was not directed at gaining maximum casualties. Their actions had to be directed towards civilians but this was used mainly to draw attention to the cause. September 11th 2001, demonstrated that in today's world terrorists are trying to get maximum casualties. Due to modern technology terrorists are capable of causing mass destruction. These transformations have allowed terrorists "to enter the political arena on a new scale and to express ideological goals of an organised sort rather than mere crime, madness or emotional derangement as in the past".¹⁸⁰ Despite these changes, assassinations are still one tactic of terrorists.

Thus, it can be seen that there are a varied conceptions of what constitutes terrorism. It is not a simple concept. Every definition analysed above contains relevant points yet there is no definition that can provide a best explanation of terrorism. Therefore, defining terrorism poses similar problems to defining political assassination, and it can be concluded that it continues to be a contested concept.

Characteristics of Terrorism

It is obvious that terrorism is not in general a mindless phenomenon. It is a means to an end. Terrorism has a collective rationality. That is, terrorist groups share common goals and ideas and select similar modes of violence against their opponents. This proves that there is a unity in conception and in the course of action within a single terrorist group. In other words, terrorism is selected as the

¹⁷⁹David C Rapoport, Assassination and Terrorism (Toronto: T. H. Best Printing Company Ltd, 1971) p3.

¹⁸⁰Fromkin, op.cit. p55.

course of action against all other alternatives. Terrorist groups choose terrorism because of “efficacy” – it is seen as being more efficient when “compared with other methods of achieving political goals”.¹⁸¹ Terrorism is the weapon of the weak. By using the term “weak” there is a negative connotation attached to the concept. Terrorists are, in most cases, oppressed people who feel that they have failed in every other legitimate way to achieve a goal. This can be seen especially in the struggle by the Tamil Tigers of Elam in Sri Lanka and the Palestinians in the Middle East. For these groups, terrorism in the long run will help achieve their goals. Terrorism is considered often to be the last resort since all other legitimate alternatives have failed. Activists see that the use of terrorism as a tactic will draw the attention of not only their own government but also that of the entire world towards their cause. Publicity of this sort is a large motivating force for terrorists. The Tamil Tigers of LTTE are a good example of this. They argue they have exhausted every way to improve the conditions of the Tamil people. Thus, the only avenue left to them is to indulge in violent tactics, which guarantee governmental and international attention for their cause. Whether this is the way to achieve their goals, is a completely different matter. In the past couple of years the Tamils Tigers have declared a ceasefire and at present are negotiating peace talks with the Sinhala government, with Norwegian and Japanese mediators.

Martha Crenshaw writes that terrorists are impatient for action.¹⁸² This impatience can stem from a number of factors like psychological or organisational pressures, personalities of leaders, demands from followers, seizing an immediate

¹⁸¹ Martha Crenshaw, *The logic of terrorism: Terrorist behaviour as a product of strategic choice* edited by Walter Reich in *Origins of Terrorism, Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p8.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* p13.

opportunity and competition from rivals.¹⁸³ It is important to point out that a terrorist act is not always instigated by the above - mentioned factors, and that terrorists also carefully plan their attacks. Terrorists, while carrying out suicide bombings, bombings, hijackings and even political assassinations, have to plan the act in great detail. In fact, success is dependent on careful planning. As a result there is little place for impatience which may lead to a failed course of action. Terrorism is seen to have one very important advantage: "if the reasons behind violence are skilfully articulated, terrorism can put the issue of political change on the public agenda".¹⁸⁴ One objective of political terrorism is to gain publicity, which will provide world-wide attention for their movement. Publicity will also inspire and mobilise supporters for their cause. This would lead to the expansion of the membership of the movement.

According to Paul Wilkinson, "terrorists place no limits on means employed and frequently resort to widespread assassination...".¹⁸⁵ In fact, a terrorist group cannot afford to limit their actions as this would defeat the very purpose of being terrorists. If people were aware that terrorists would not cross a certain threshold, then nobody would pay any attention to their threats. As a result, their actions would not produce the desired outcome. Wilkinson seems to believe this might have always been the case with terrorists: that they had no limits. It seems that terrorists have evolved and only very recently have reached the position where there are no limits on the means employed. In the past, terrorists did have certain limits. For example, when Narodnaya Volya attempted to assassinate Grand Duke Serge Alexandrovich, the assassin aborted the mission when he saw that "the duke was accompanied by his children rather than risk harming the

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p17.

¹⁸⁵ Paul Wilkinson, 'Terrorism and the Liberal State', *op.cit.* p52.

intended victim's family".¹⁸⁶ However, September the 11th has shown that in modern society there are no limits on what course of action terrorists will take in order to achieve their goals. Therefore, it is possible to acknowledge the change in modern - day terrorists from their earlier counterparts.

Furthermore, as stated by Thomas H Snitch, terrorism can be divided into 'indirect' and 'direct' terrorism whereby "Indirect terrorism is the random violence aimed at the general population"¹⁸⁷, for example HAMAS planting a bomb in a crowded market, or the random shooting at people. Direct terrorism, on the other hand, "focuses the violent action on a political institution or an individual".¹⁸⁸ The kidnapping and killing of the Egyptian religious affairs minister Zahabi and former Prime Minister of Egypt, Nasser, also exemplify such direct attacks on specific people.

Similarities and Differences between Terrorism and Assassination

There is, however, an inherent connection between terrorism and political assassination. Terrorists commit a wide range of violent acts, for example, kidnapping, hijacking or bombing. Assassination is only one of the tools that terrorists use. Assassinations can be seen as a form of indirect terrorism conducted in order to remove a particular individual. Yet terrorism is usually aimed at a general and collective target. Political assassination is highly discriminatory because it seeks the death of a particular actor. Terrorists often commit atrocious acts in order to draw public attention to the cause, whereas, a political

¹⁸⁶ Hoffman, 'Inside Terrorism', *op.cit.* p18.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas H Snitch, "Terrorism and Political Assassinations: A Transnational Assessment, 1968-1980", in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 463, September 1982. p55.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

assassination is committed with the sole purpose of eliminating a specific individual. Even though political assassinations are typically committed in front of a huge audience, this is more a matter of convenience than of necessary publicity. Though, at the same time, some degree of publicity for their cause is always welcome. This is because it would enable the terrorists to draw some attention to their struggle in the hope that they can gain world sympathy. There have been political assassinations which have not been committed in public, such as the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984, when she was assassinated within her own residential area by her own Sikh bodyguards.

There is a difference between the mind of the assassin and that of the terrorist. The assassin destroys men and women who are corrupting the system while the terrorist destroys a system, which in their opinion has already corrupted everyone it touches. Terrorism may be a product of impatience, but political assassination may be an act which, if not carefully planned has involved much time and thought. The immediate desired consequence of a political assassination is desire for change. Whereas terrorism aims for publicity that is and desire for their agenda will receive world - wide attention. Assassination is an incident, a passing deed, an event; terrorism is a process, a way of life, a dedication. At most, assassination involves a conspiracy, but terrorism requires a movement.¹⁸⁹ All political assassinations cannot be equated to terrorism and all terrorism is not political assassination. In other words, because a terrorist group commits a political assassination it does not imply that this is an act of terrorism.

Furthermore, Thomas Snitch lists five basic goals identified by both terrorism and political assassinations. First, to receive popular recognition for a

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p55-56.

cause/group. Second, to receive official recognition for a cause/group. Thirdly, to gain recruits. Fourth, to undermine the morale and the prestige of the government. Finally, to provoke the government to use such harsh and desperate measures as martial law, curfews, and massive arrests, causing popular discontent and helping to overthrow the government.¹⁹⁰ The five basic goals that Snitch mentions do not necessarily always the case and the degree of importance of each varies amongst terrorists and political assassins. Receiving popular recognition is very important to the terrorist. It is however, less important to the political assassin. Receiving official recognition is not at all important to a political assassin. Terrorists aim to gain recruits unlike political assassins. Both terrorists and political assassins aim to undermine the government and finally, terrorists may aim for harsh measures by the government again unlike to political assassins. Thus, Snitch's five goals identified for both terrorism and political assassination do not seem to fit the case. If anything, this illustrates that the two concepts are very different but sometimes may share common characteristics. An important similarity between assassinations and terrorism is that they are both about power. The causes for assassination can be numerous, ranging from social, religious, and economic to political problems, but the main cause most of the time is political. Terrorism at the same time can also be caused because of social, religious, economic and political factors, but the main reason that instigates terrorists to violence is political.

¹⁹⁰ The five points are taken from Thomas H Snitch, 'Terrorism and Political Assassinations: A Transnational Assessment 1968-1980' in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, September 1982. p55-56.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that it is necessary to understand the correct definition of the term political assassinations for both social-scientific research and policy. There is a tendency to label political assassination as terrorism. However, this is not necessarily always the case. Additionally, as mentioned earlier there are certain requirements which are necessary for an assassination to be a political assassination; these have been put forward by James F Kirkham, Sheldon G Levy and William J Crotty in the 1970s. It is these three factors that distinguish a political assassination from ordinary murder. These factors are a target that is a prominent political figure, a political motive for the killing, and the potential political impact of the death or escape from death, as the case may be. Thus, in essence, a political assassination is a politically - motivated act of killing, directed against prominent figures in political life with political consequences, and is not therefore just simply a murder.

Furthermore, having evaluated all the pros and cons of various typologies of political assassination, this thesis found that the typology used by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty is the most appropriate typology of political assassinations, as this focuses on the motivations for political assassinations. Although not all the types mentioned by them contain the three elements required for an assassination to be a political assassination it is still the most relevant as all three factors are found in some form in it.

Chapter 2

Justifications offered for Political Assassinations

Introduction

Many forms of struggle are justified by their participants by the argument that they will improve lives of people who are politically, economically and socially oppressed or deprived or otherwise dissatisfied with their way of life. Whether violence results in any real change is questionable. Some instances of use of force have brought about positive change, which can be witnessed, for example the fight against nazism which eventually brought about its end. Thus, there are many forms of violence which can lead ultimately to positive change.¹⁹¹ This is however odd as it questions the idea of sanctity of life. The right to life is an extremely complex issue which encompasses a number of issues such as the use of abortion and the death penalty. It is a right not dependent on just living in one country but "it is supposed to be a universal human right, a moral right, not dependent on the laws or rules of a particular social institution".¹⁹² Clearly, assassinating someone is depriving that person of this right. In some cultures this right to life is related to the idea of sanctity of life. Sanctity of life is taken to imply that as life is created by God it deserves protection, despite human beings tendency towards self

¹⁹¹ Although thousands of people lost their lives in the process.

¹⁹² Richard Norman, Ethics, Killing and War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p40.

destruction.¹⁹³ God creates natural calamities like earthquakes, floods, famines, old age etc. From this premise it can be followed that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the destruction of life provided that it is done by God, not by man. It is however important to identify the difference between the deliberate taking of life and death due to natural occurrences. If a society believes that life is sacred then it would be wrong not only to assassinate, but also to take any form of life such as plants and animals. This in turn creates a further debate as to why human life is more important than any other form of life. The most common answers, however, relate to self consciousness. Humans possess qualities such as freewill, happiness and sympathy which are not possessed by other species. Here again one can question the meaning of 'qualities'. If a human being does not possess certain qualities does that imply he can be killed? In short, it is difficult to find concrete answers to contested concepts like 'qualities'. Therefore, political assassination follows the same suit. Irrespective of the fact that the victim may have pursued policies not accepted by society or made decisions which have not been in the best interest of the society the victim still possesses the right to life. In other words, the qualities possessed by a victim may not be considered as good for the society however under no circumstance can this allow for the taking of this persons right to life.

Political assassination is one aspect of numerous conflicts that we experience. Thus, in the words of Dougherty and Pfaltzgraft:

¹⁹³ Sanctity of life is a concept that is prevalent in different cultures although there might be some difference the underlying point is that life is sacred and its not up to any human to another humans life.

international war is one form of social conflict—undoubtedly the most important single form in terms of its potential consequences for the individual and nations. However, there are many other forms of social conflicts: civil war, revolution, coup, guerrilla insurgency, political assassination, sabotage, terrorism, seizure of hostages, prison riots, strikes and strike-breaking, sit-ins, threats, displays of force, economic sanctions and reprisals, psychological warfare, propaganda, tavern brawls, labor management disputes, flare-ups at collegiate or professional sports, divorce contests and legal wrangling over the custody of children, intrafamily fights and felonious crimes¹⁹⁴

The task of morally justifying an act of violence is difficult. Through the centuries however, various justifications for violence have emerged. Many of these arguments have similarities to those put forward for war or other violent political acts. In this chapter I will discuss a number of these justifications offered for it is important to understand how violence has been justified in the world of political thought and moral philosophy. Some theories have been rejected by potential and actual assassins as they did not offer substantial justifications for political assassinations. These theories are pacifism and realism. A brief discussion of each of them will illustrate why they could not

¹⁹⁴James e Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraft in Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey. (New York: Longman, 5th edition) p195.

be used for the purposes of this thesis. If war and killing (and other forms of violence) can be justified however, it follows that assassinations can be justified along similar lines. The three most appropriate justifications that can be offered the consequentialist justification, the just war tradition and terroristic justifications are considered last.

Pacifism

For pacifists, “moral concepts can indeed be applied meaningfully to international affairs. But the result of such application, in the case of war, is always that war should not be resorted to”.¹⁹⁵ There are two different forms of pacifism: absolute pacifism and contingent pacifism. An absolute pacifist considers “any kind of violence (especially killing) as an intrinsic wrong, whereas a more moderate version (contingent pacifism) contends that it is the kind of scale of violence (especially killing) which war involves that cannot be justified”.¹⁹⁶ Neither believe that there can be a moral justification for war. Furthermore a number of different forms of pacifism such as secular and religious pacifism that can be seen within a number of different traditions. Secular pacifism with all traditions is motivated by a belief that it is wrong to take human life than a scriptural authority telling believers not to kill. Religious pacifism within different traditions maintains that God would never encourages killing. Thus, within the Christian tradition there are three specific forms pacifists of principle, pragmatic pacifist and selective pacifist.

¹⁹⁵ Brian Orend, Micheal Walzar on War and Justice (Cardiff: University of Wales Press:2000)

p4.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p69.

According to the first view “only non violence can beget non violence”.¹⁹⁷ This form clearly promotes the idea of non violence which rules out any form of violence. According to pragmatic pacifists “violence is counter productive and non violence productive”.¹⁹⁸ Again the point is that there is no gain from engaging in violence and therefore one should not get involved. Finally, selective pacifism “simply selects what things to be and not to be pacifists about”.¹⁹⁹ The example given here by Elford is that a pacifist might engage in a conventional war but using nuclear weapons in war is out of the question as there are no winners from such events.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, pacifists within the Islamic faith are the Bahai’s who maintain that:

the earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.
Strong emphasis is placed on the abolition of prejudices
of all kinds, on full equality between men and women,
and on the responsibility of each individual to
investigate truth for himself²⁰¹

Hinduism believes in the notion of Ahimsa or non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi was a firm believer of the principle and actually applied it to his activities. As a result violence is denounced by principles of Hinduism illustrating its pacifist side. The general conclusion that can be drawn is that pacifism in all its forms denounces the use of violence.

¹⁹⁷ John Elford, “Christianity and War”, in Christian Ethics edited by Robin Gill. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:2001). p174.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Douglas Martin, The Case of the Bahá’í Minority in Iran. <http://www.bahai.org/article-1-8-3-7.html#7>

Pacifism raises the issue of the morality of self-defence. Many pacifists declare that, "what they reject is war and not all uses of violence; hence individual self-defence may be justified even though war is not".²⁰² Yet as McMahan points out "the acceptance of individual acts of self defence may itself imply an acceptance in principle of certain types of war".²⁰³ Violence in certain cases like self-defence may be justified but "no recognizable version of pacifism allows killing even as a defensive act".²⁰⁴

Pacifism in the strictest sense may be completely impossible. In the words of Orend, "the ideals contained in our shared discourse on war presuppose that the non-violent world imagined by the pacifists is not actually unattainable, at least for the foreseeable future".²⁰⁵ This complete rejection of any type of violence by pacifism suggests that a country adopts this view then its citizens are going to be defenceless. Pacifists reply to such arguments by stating that

we do not need to resort to war in order to protect people and punish aggression effectively. In the event of an armed conflict by an aggressor state, an organised and committed campaign of non-violent civil disobedience –perhaps combined with international diplomatic and economic sanctions-would be just as

²⁰² Jeff McMahan. "War and Peace", edited by Peter Singer in A Companion to Ethics (Oxford:Blackwell: 1991) p386.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Jonathan Glover, Causing Death and Saving Lives (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977) p255.

²⁰⁵ Orend, op.cit. p69.

effective as war in expelling the aggressor, with much less destruction of lives and property²⁰⁶

Such beliefs are not widely accepted, and many believe that “pacifism lacks realism”.²⁰⁷ Although, it is apparent that there are stark differences between realism and pacifism there is however one similarity between realism and pacifism, which is that

they both deny that war can ever be subject to moral limitation. Moreover, both regard the attempt so to subject war as dangerous or counterproductive, increasing rather than decreasing the likelihood of war, adding to its ferocity, and obscuring the moral degradation and corruption that war inevitably brings about²⁰⁸

Pacifists often argue that war leads to the “deadening of moral sensitivity and the erosion of moral responsibility”.²⁰⁹ The ultimate aim of pacifists is not an attempt to avoid violence “but about the replacement of evil with good, about the positive overcoming of violence”.²¹⁰ It can be safely said that for pacifists the entire concept of just and unjust war is meaningless. Thus, political assassination for an absolute pacifist would be never be justified under any circumstances.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p70.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p69.

²⁰⁸ A.j Coates, *The Ethics of War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) p82.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p83.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* p88.

They would feel that carrying out such an act would be simply morally wrong. Contingent pacifists would not justify political assassinations as the scale of violence involved would be unjustifiable. According to religious pacifism God would not encourage political assassinations. In all forms of religious pacifism any form of violence is forbidden. In conclusion, for pacifists there is no justification that can be offered for political assassinations.

Realism

In the beginning of the 20th century realism came to the forefront during the inter war period. It helped to understand war more specifically its causes. The study of war showed the realists the importance of power and the need to maximise ones own interests and thereby warned state leaders from sacrificing their own interests. As a result, "this view of human nature, as self interested and unconstrained by an universally higher moral laws are profound for civil society".²¹¹ Human nature seen by realism is profoundly selfish. Boucher quotes Machiavelli and says "human appetites are insatiable, for by nature we are so constituted that there is nothing we cannot long for".²¹² A system of self-help is another important element of realism. Each actor is responsible for their own survival. There is no room for trust, friendship etc. Thus, realists also believed that national interests are of prime importance. In other words,

²¹¹ David Boucher, Political Theories of International Relations, From Thucydides to Present. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) p29.

²¹² Ibid.

“everything and everyone is a means to an end, and has to be justified in terms of its, or his usefulness”.²¹³

The realist view “sports a profound scepticism about the application of moral concepts”.²¹⁴ The main concepts of realism, like power and national security, “motivate states during wartime, and thus moral appeals are strictly wishful thinking”.²¹⁵ However, it can be said that “if morality played no part at all in international relations, realism would lose much of its point”.²¹⁶ Realists believe that war is an inherent part of the anarchical society and “that it ought to be resorted to only if it makes sense in terms of national self-interest; and that, once war has begun, a state ought to do whatever it can to win”.²¹⁷ Realists maintain “war is a world apart, where life itself is at stake, where human nature is reduced to its elemental forms, where self-interest and necessity prevail”.²¹⁸ There is no place for morality and law as people are interested in looking after only themselves. Michael Walzer rejects realism and insists on the morality of war. Walzer explains the Melian dialogue in great detail.

This memorable, well known piece describes a historical meeting between Athenians generals and the leaders of Melos, a Greek island. The expansionist Athenians were to annex Melos and supplement their

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Orend, op.cit. p4.

²¹⁵ Ibid. p4 -5

²¹⁶ A.J. Coates, op.cit. p21.

²¹⁷ Orend, op.cit. p62.

²¹⁸ Micheal Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars. A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books: 1977). p3.

power, the Melians to preserve their independence and protect their own life²¹⁹

Since the Melians refused to get involved they were defeated by the Athenians. This brings to the forefront a number of issues about the morality of war. The killings of the Melians were seen by the Athenians as “the circumstances of war and the necessities of nature”. As a result killings were an accepted part of war for the Athenians. Thus, military necessities were the political reality of engaging in war.

Another aspect of realism that the Athenians put forward is that “if we must act in accordance with our interests, driven by our fears of one another, then talk about justice cannot possibly be anything more than talk”.²²⁰ Acts are carried out ensuring that interests are protected. Similarly, an assassin is looking out for his own interests which in an indirect way represents the interest of the societies. As a result an assassin feels that assassinating a political figure who is a threat to his society is justified. The assassin feels he/she is looking out for his own interests and the grief which effects the victim’s family is of no consequence to him. Also,

it is generally true, but especially so in time of violent conflict, that we understand what other people are saying only if we see through their fair pretences and

²¹⁹ Orend, *op.cit.* p62.

²²⁰ Walzer, *op.cit.* p10.

translate moral talk into the harder currency of interest
talk²²¹

Therefore, Walzer's opinions on realism can be grounded in three propositions

(1) there is no freedom to choose morally in the international arena; (2) moral argument with regard to international affairs is meaningless; and (3) any link between morality and armed force will result in greater destruction than an amoral stance²²²

Another important concept is strategy, which "is the other language of war, and while it is commonly said to be free from the difficulties of moral discourse, its use is equally problematic".²²³ In a sense a political assassination is a strategy. It is used by assassin to get rid of a person who is a potential threat to what the assassin aims to achieve, or may desire and even a threat to the assassins community. The strategic thing to do would be to assassinate him. Furthermore, "strategy, like morality, is a language of justification"²²⁴ thus, strategy is another way of justifying an act of political assassination. Therefore, one thing to remember is "that the moral reality of war is not fixed by the actual activities of soldiers but by the opinions of mankind".²²⁵ In the same way the moral reality of a political assassination is also affected by the opinions of mankind making it a subjective notion.

²²¹ Ibid. p11.

²²² Orend, op.cit. p62-63.

²²³ Walzer, op.cit. p13.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid. p15.

A.J. Coates points out that “without the antithetical notion of ‘utopianism’ (or of its synonyms ‘moralism’, ‘idealism’, and ‘legalism’) realism would be largely unintelligible”.²²⁶ For a realist utopianism has “grossly inflated expectations about the world of international politics”.²²⁷ Moreover, a realist considers “the decision to go to war should be dictated not by vagaries of moral sentiment but by pragmatic considerations of power and interest”.²²⁸ At the same time, realists are aware that “the reverse often applies, particularly in the case of those wars of intervention that lend themselves more readily to a moral or altruistic interpretation”.²²⁹ Furthermore, realists believe that “[r]eal war is limited because of its instrumental nature and because it relies on political guidance to determine its objectives, objectives that if realists has his way (and if morality and ideology are kept in check) are always specific and finite”.²³⁰ Saying that “morality ends where war begins” can sum up much of the realist argument.²³¹

For realists, political assassinations are a part of the anarchical society. An assassin may believe that committing a political assassination would promote security for himself and his society and this may make the assassin or his political masters more powerful. If a political assassination achieves such goals as security and power then it will be justified in realist terms. A political assassin driven by self-interest to achieve communal or self security reflects Walzer’s belief that “men and women do what they must to save themselves

²²⁶ Coates, *op.cit.* p18.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.* p23.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.* p25.

²³¹ *Ibid.* p27.

and their communities, and morality and law have no place".²³² Therefore, it is correct to think that "for a realist war is not an end in itself but a means to something else"²³³ and the political assassination may be designed to achieve security for the community. Finally, this may help to limit the number of political assassinations that will be committed. Most political assassinations have a specific target which is guided by an objective that must be achieved. However, an assassin cannot have any self interest as this would defy the concept of a political assassination. Nevertheless, political assassinations can be an act carried out by a political assassin in order to secure security or better conditions for himself and his community. This he may view as self interest. Thus, realism paints a very direct approach in trying to justify any acts of violence.

History of Justifications

One ought to pose the following questions: first, is any form of political violence justifiable and second is it always considered wrong to kill someone? A number of answers have been offered. In most cases the assassin justifies his or her actions in his or her own terms. Whether the justification given is accepted by the world is commonly not a matter of concern to the assassin. Religious justifications for assassinations have been given. There is evidence of religious justification in the Bible. Today there are all sorts of groups using religion to justify their ally types of violent actions, for example, the Aryan Nations, Hamas, and Aum Shrinnyko. This use of religion to justify acts of

²³² Orend, *op.cit.* p62.

²³³ Coates, *op.cit.* p25.

violence is not straightforward. In some cases religion fulfils a specific political goal which may have social or religious connotations for example the concept of purifying society. As a result, religion is only part of the justification employed. The justification presented for assassinations committed by religious fundamentalists is considered more powerful than for those assassins motivated by non-religious reasons. This is for three reasons. Firstly, the justification coming from a religious authority carries more weight as it is coming from religious texts and ideologues and therefore this gives legitimacy for actions. Related to this is the fact that fundamentalists believe that there is a notion of being ruled by a God/entity to whom we are indebted. We exist because of Him and as a result owe Him everything. Most religious fundamentalists possess this feeling of owing everything to their creator. An evidence of this can be seen in the Koran when it states that "God is your lord, the creator of all things. There is no God but Him".²³⁴ Finally, fundamentalists argue that since they were created by God it is Gods duty to provide. Thus, for religious groups religion is an important force which is used to justify acts.

One can say that religious reasons are compelling for an assassin as the relation to God gives any action more grounding. Therefore there is a tendency amongst terrorists who commit political and social reasons for violence to attach religious significance to their cause. This implies that religion adds more of a significance or legitimacy to their struggle. For example, the assassin of Anwar Sadat committed the assassination out of outrage for God and the assassin of Yitzhak Rabin believed it was God who told him to kill. Evidence

²³⁴ The Koran, translated by N.J. Dawood. (England: Penguin books, 2003) p332.

can be found in an interview when Dr Umar Abd al-Rahman mufti and leader of the Islamic groups in Egypt when asked:

Q. What is your opinion on the issue of political assassinations and [claims] that you are resorting to them against those who do not share your opinion?

A. We do not exclude anything from our minds. If there is any law in the Sharia that orders the assassination of someone, then we will kill him –a literal word for word application.

Q. Do you think that Islam sanctions assassinations?

A. Islam sanctions the killing of a killer. Assassinations is a new and general word. The issue is whether he person killed or did not kill – whether he committed a crime or did not commit a crime²³⁵

In both cases religion was the motivating factor behind the assassinations. Furthermore, Franklin Ford's book "Political Murder, From Tyrannicide to Terrorism" is an intricate history of assassinations committed around the world. According to Ford amongst the reasons put forward for committing assassinations are religious reasons.²³⁶ Ford states a number of other reasons for assassinations such as dynastic rivalry, and, more commonly, social unrest, religious fanaticism and choice among secular ideologies like nationalism,

²³⁵ Interview with Dr Umar Adb al- Rahman. Summary of World Broadcasts, 17/ 04/89.

²³⁶ For further reference on Fords account on the connection between killing and religion see chapter 1 p7-24.

libertarianism, egalitarianism, socialism and even anarchism. However, Ford never directly addresses the question of justification behind the assassinations throughout the book.²³⁷ It is left to the interpretation of the reader.

Having looked at the several theories for justifying political assassination and understating why they cannot be used this thesis has found three theories put forward by Yehuda to be most suited to justify political assassinations. According to Yehuda the three types of justifications for assassinations have developed in the West:

The first, was a purely instrumental one, developed by the Greeks and the Romans stipulating that the moral value of an assassination depends entirely on the end(s) achieved. The second, developed by Christian philosophers stipulates that political assassination is evil in itself, but nonetheless assassinations can be justified on the grounds that it can prevent a greater evil. The third, was developed solely to justify an assassination which was part of a terrorist campaign. Participation in the struggle, or assassination, was a good thing in itself regardless of the particular results achieved²³⁸

In other words, the typology for justifications that can be found for political assassinations in this thesis:

²³⁷ Frankin Ford, Political Murder. op.cit.

²³⁸ Yehuda, 'Political Assassinations as Rhetorical Devices', op.cit. p327.

- Instrumental justification
- Non Utilitarian justification
- Terroristic justification

This seems to be the most appropriate justifications that can be offered for political assassinations in that it offers justifications from three different levels of analysis. This includes instrumental, moral and terroristic justifications and thereby allows to cover the main areas in terms of analysing the consequences of a political assassination, the moral reasons behind a political assassination and influence of ideologues which are all used to justify a political assassination.

Thus, the next section examines each of these types of justifications in turn. The consequentialist philosophers whose arguments will be analysed are Ted Honderich and Richard Norman. These particular thinkers were chosen because they have put forward theoretical explanations for political violence which can also be used to justify political assassinations. The following section will explore the Just War tradition and how it may be adopted to offer justifications for assassinations. Finally, the remaining section will examine how terrorists and other extremist groups justify political assassinations. This type of analysis will involve understanding the teaching of religious ideologues like Sayyid Qutb, Mohammed Al Faraj, and Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Instrumental Justification

Consequentialism

Historically the instrumental justification for violence has existed throughout centuries. As mentioned above the Greeks and the Romans have always maintained that the justification depended on the consequences. The modern version of instrumental justification is consequentialism.

“Consequentialism is the view that whatever values an individual or institutional agent adopts, the proper response to those values is to promote them”.²³⁹ [The agent would be responsible for only promoting the values that he/she values. This point can be criticised on the basis that there are certain values that should be honoured but not necessarily promoted.] Consequentialists see the relation between agents and values as instrumental. Agents act to promote values. There are two propositions that consequentialists defend:

1. Every prognosis for an option, every way the world may be as the result of a choice of option, has a value that is determined, through perhaps not up to uniqueness, by the valuable properties realised there: determined by how far it is a happy world in which liberty is respected, a world where nature thrives, and so on for different valuable; the value determined will not be unique, so far as the weightings between such properties are not uniquely fixed.

²³⁹ Philip Pettit, *Consequentialism* edited by Peter Singer in *A Companion to Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) p231.

2. Every option, every possibility which an agent can realise or not, has its value fixed by the values of its prognoses: its value is a function of the values associated with the different ways it may lead the world to be²⁴⁰

According to the above propositions, the choice of political assassination would thereby depend on the value of its results rather than the virtue of the action. Secondly, political assassinations are fixed upon other values, which may lead to a better world. For example the assassination of a dictator would be justified if it improved the social, economic and political conditions of the country. In this way an act of political assassinations would be considered the right action.

The consequentialist holds that the proper way for an agent to respond to any values recognised is to promote them: that is, in every choice to select the option with prognoses that mean it is the best gamble with those values²⁴¹

It can be said that the consequentialists' approach depends entirely on the consequences being good and bad. "A distinctive mark of consequentialism might rather be this, that it regards the value of actions as always consequential

²⁴⁰ Ibid p232.

²⁴¹ Ibid p233.

(or, as we may more generally say, derivative), and not intrinsic".²⁴² If the assassination promotes happiness and ends suffering the action is deemed to be good. If the desired aim was not achieved then the action had negative value. In other words, a political assassination would only be the right action if the results achieved were better than any other alternative.

The most influential version of consequentialism is utilitarianism. D. D. Raphael states that "according to utilitarianism, an action is right if it is useful for promoting happiness".²⁴³ The theory measures happiness as the sum of pleasures. Pleasure is seen as good and pain as bad. Therefore, actions which either produce pleasure or happiness, or ones which remove or prevent unhappiness and pain are right. In other words, the action, that produces the most happiness or prevents unhappiness, is undoubtedly the right action. With respect to this, if an assassination were seen to promote the greatest happiness and remove most unhappiness in a society, it would be the right action.

There is another form of utilitarianism that includes other goods like virtue, love, knowledge and beauty. However, "traditional utilitarianism, tries to simplify things as much as possible, says that pleasure is the sole intrinsic good and that these other things are valued for the sake of pleasure, either the pleasure which they themselves contain or the pleasure which they like to produce". There is a need to make a distinction between good as means and good as an end. A political assassination will not be committed for the sake of love of committing an assassination or because it is good as an end in itself. A political assassination which will promote further happiness for the society is what an assassin hopes for and this represents the fact that the assassination

²⁴² Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Consequentialism", edited by Joram Graf Haber in Absolutism and its Consequentialist Critics (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc, 1994) p94.

²⁴³ D.D. Raphael, Moral Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press:1994) p34.

represents the means and the creation of a better society is the end. For the consequentialist it can be stated that a political assassination could be seen as morally good if it produces morally good ends, not because the means used is moral in itself.

Indeed, "utilitarianism of all varieties says right actions are useful actions, good as means; that rightness is in fact of efficiency, but restricted to efficiency for good ends".²⁴⁴ *Classical utilitarianism* or *Hedonistic utilitarianism* holds that the only thing that matters is the production of happiness as an end. Whereas *Ideal utilitarianism* holds that there are other things that are important as an end. Both maintain that the utility of an act and its usefulness in producing good results are the things that determine the rightness of the act. Thus, an assassination would be the right act if it resulted in positive changes and promoted happiness. This would to a certain degree hold true for Yigal Amir, the assassin who killed Yitzhak Rabin. He proclaimed to do what was God ordered him to do. He considered it a great privilege to carry out God's order. This represents Amir's self-interest in the task as it increased his happiness. (At the same time other motives that initiated the assassination along with results after the assassination should not be ignored). More specifically Amir's action would fit the theory called *Theological Utilitarianism*. "On this view, the promotion of the general happiness is the purpose of God, who does not suffer the limitations of human nature in being self-interested".²⁴⁵ That is, God arranges for his disinterested purposes to be carried out by self-interested humans by setting the possibility

²⁴⁴ *Ibid* p35.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid* p38.

of reward and punishment. "Utilitarianism is often said to assume a God's eye point of view".²⁴⁶

Therefore, it can be safely said that the concept of self-interest is an essential part of the theory of utilitarianism. "For the most part, most people act with a view to their own happiness, to self-interest".²⁴⁷ With regards to this, murder, assault, theft and so on are seen as reducing general happiness to the immediate victims and to the wider society, but to the thief or murderer the action would only increase happiness as it would enable him for instance to acquire money. Classical utilitarianism states that happiness includes everyone and anyone. However, Jeremy Bentham states that people usually (not always) act from the motive of self-interest. According to utilitarianism this would be a bad action as this would not promote happiness to a number of people but, on the other hand, it would be the right action for the perpetrators as it would promote their happiness. This does not hold true in the case of a political assassination because the assassin considers the act to be beneficial for the entire society. His own self interest is important along with the happiness of society, which would be a result of the assassination. Contemporary utilitarianism usually takes a different view. It is divided into Act-utilitarianism and Rule-utilitarianism. The focus is not on the production of happiness and pleasures but on utility. "A moral theory is utilitarian if and only if it assesses acts and/or rules in terms of nothing but their utility".²⁴⁸ Utility stands for a matter of usefulness. Today, utilitarians like R.M. Hare and J. Griffin do not measure everything in terms of happiness, pleasure and self-

²⁴⁶ Brad Hooker, "Rule-Utilitarianism and Euthanasia", edited by Hugh La Follette in Ethics in Practice, An Anthology (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997) p44.

²⁴⁷ Raphael, op.cit p39.

²⁴⁸ Hooker, op.cit p43.

interest and they are not the only desirable goods available. There are other desirable goods like knowledge, friendship and love. The reason for the change is that people now tend to care for things apart from pleasure, such as knowledge, religion and autonomy. Utilitarian's will favor benefits to a minority if the benefits to the minority will result in overall good in society. In other words, "when our actions will affect various people in various different ways, it is the characteristically utilitarian conclusion that the right action is that which maximizes utility (however construed) summed impersonally across all those affected by that action".²⁴⁹ An assassin would therefore envisage an assassination to produce greater utilities for the entire society and thereby an assassination would be justified.

Act-utilitarianism can be divided into two versions.

One version holds that an act is right if and only if its actual consequence would contain at least as much utility as those of any other act open to the agent. Another version claims that an act is right if and only if its expected utility is at least as great as that of any alternative²⁵⁰

According to the first version a political assassination would be the right action if its actual consequence were as much as that of any other alternative act available to the agent. According to the second version, a political assassination is the right act if its expected result or utility is as much as that of

²⁴⁹ Robert E Goodin, "Utility and the Good" edited by Peter Singer in The Companion to Ethics (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991) p245.

²⁵⁰ Hooker, op.cit p44.

any other method to achieve the same consequence. It is important to note that both effectively justify the act of killing on the basis of the level of utility.

Rule-utilitarianism does not assess each act on solely on the basis of its utility. Rule-utilitarianism assesses acts on the basis of rules and the rules depend on the basis of utility. "Rule utilitarianism holds that an act is morally permissible if and only if the rules with the greatest expected utility would allow it".²⁵¹ Utility of rules is a matter of general internalization. If utilities of rules are to be internalized then it suggests that the rules are justified and one can act and react according to them. Rule-utilitarianism does not concentrate only on rules that have been already accepted but tries to find acceptable codes and tries to make people use them.

For unlike act-utilitarianism, rule-utilitarianism agrees with common conviction that individual acts of murder, torture, promise breaking and so on can be wrong even when they produce somewhat more good than their omission would produce²⁵²

This rule is likely to produce more good than if these acts were not prohibited. Therefore, rules against murder, torture and promise breaking are all justified in society. Such acts according rule-utilitarianism would be justified if only there was a grantee that the consequences of acts like murder, torture and political assassinations would have greater utility than these acts being

²⁵¹ Ibid p45.

²⁵² Ibid p45.

forbidden. The results of a political assassination would have to produce greater utility than any other action in order to be justified.

A utilitarian concept excludes values that are based on respect: "more important of all such values include a respect for life whereas utilitarian thinking by itself justifies too easily the sacrificing of someone's life to promote the good of others".²⁵³ In summary, the utilitarian reasons that it is wrong to kill someone because firstly killing someone causes grief to family and friends. Secondly, there is a loss to the wider society that could have benefited from the services of the dead man. This point however, may not be completely correct, as the victim may have led a totally isolated life. Thirdly, killing someone denies the person of a future. Lastly, killing always inflicts considerable pain on the victim.

In conclusion consequentialism has the potential to justify an act of political assassination if and only if it can be shown to have maximised general happiness in society. Thus, the assassinations of political figures in this thesis was committed with the hope that it would put an end to the suffering in the society and possibly promote happiness.

Non utilitarian Justification

In this section a range of moral justifications from a variety of traditions such as the Christian, Hindu and Chinese traditions will be analysed. The main justification that can be derived from all three traditions is that if an act of violence puts an end to larger violence then the act can be justified. In all

²⁵³ Richard Norman, *Ethics, Killing and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p11.

traditions parallels are made with war. War plays an integral part in the Christian, Hindu and Chinese tradition. It will become clear in the discussion that in most of the cases war was committed in order prevent further trouble and this as a result justified war.

According to Coates "this tradition has monopolised the moral debate about war, at least in the Western World".²⁵⁴ Is there a moral justification behind war? In the words of A.J. Coates

in the theoretical sphere the tradition has been by far the most prolific in the development of an apparatus of specific moral principles and concepts by means of which the experience of war can be articulated and subjected to systematic moral investigation²⁵⁵

War and conflict has been the important focus of study for all within International relations. The study of war is not just limited to people within academia but most people often ponder the idea of war. In fact, "the stability of the international system is usually defined in terms of its proximity to or remoteness from the occurrences or likelihood of large scale war".²⁵⁶ This interest in trying to understand the concept of war led to the much-asked question of what is war. According to Clausewitz "war is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will"²⁵⁷. The United States' War

²⁵⁴ Coates, *op.cit.* p1.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraft, *op.cit.* p188.

²⁵⁷ *Clausewitz on War* edited by Anatol Rapoport. (Harmondsworth : Penguin Books Ltd, 1968) p101.

on Terrorism, which has brought the concept of war and more specially the notion of Just War back to the forefront. The Just War tradition:

is rooted in a sense of human moral fallibility and the conviction that any moral enterprise, especially one as uncompromising as war, is always to a greater or lesser extent flawed²⁵⁸

Furthermore, one important aspect of Just War is that it “

provides a defence of the use of violence in war that parallels both the common sense justifications for the use of violence by individuals and perhaps more to the point, common-sense justifications for the use of violence by the state for the domestic defence of rights²⁵⁹

However, by examining the Just War tradition it can be seen that “ a just war is more a matter of preventing or curbing (one’s own as well as that of an adversary) than it is of promoting good”.²⁶⁰ Just War theory has two components. “The first of these, known as the theory of *jus as bellum*, defines the conditions under which it is permissible to resort to war. The second theory, that of *jus in bello*, sets the limits of permissible conduct in

²⁵⁸ Coates, *op.cit.* p2.

²⁵⁹ McMahan, *op.cit.* p386.

²⁶⁰ Coates, *op.cit.* p3.

war”.²⁶¹ Justification for violence and killing can be found in the former. One of the most noted books in contemporary use is Michael Walzer’s ‘Just and Unjust Wars’, which provides a detailed account of the morality of war by which similarities can be found for committing a political assassination.

The Just War tradition has “been heavily influenced by Christianity”.²⁶² It is said that “the very success of just war theory has tended to divide Christians from the Middle Ages and forward into those who accept participation in violence, specifically war, and those who do not”.²⁶³ The tradition enjoyed a long development which included Augustine, Aquinas and Grotius to name a few. In the words of Geoffrey Best,

like most of the serious writing about moral values in relation to war, its language comes out of two related great traditions: the ancient Christian one, substantially founded by St Augustine, and developed to a high pitch of refinement by the close of the Middle Ages, and intermittently resuscitated since then²⁶⁴

The second phase of the development of Just War theory is associated with St Thomas Aquinas, who takes over Augustine’s requirement that a war be declared by a legitimate authority and be for a just cause but adds to them

²⁶¹ McMahan, *op.cit.* p386.

²⁶² Robert L. Holmes, “Can War be Morally Justified? The Just War Theory “, edited by Jean Bethke Elshtain in *Just War Theory*. p198.

²⁶³ James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) pxxv.

²⁶⁴ Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980). p3.

requirement his own".²⁶⁵ Augustine states that "the real evils of war, are 'love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity and the like'".²⁶⁶ With regards to an assassin fierce and implacable enmity are the most important as it is the driving force that leads to a political assassination.

According to the Just War tradition there are six requirements that a state needs to fulfil:

- Just Cause: "war is permissible only to confront a real and certain danger i.e. to protect innocent life, to preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence, and to secure human rights".²⁶⁷ This has been one of the most important aspects of the Just War theory. It is believed that "the absolute conviction that their cause is just (and that the adversary against whom they fight is the consummation of evil) may encourage combatants to override the moral limits of war or to neglect other equally weighty considerations, such as the costs of war or the shedding of innocent blood".²⁶⁸ Therefore, in such terms an assassin always believes that the cause he is fighting for is just. Since a political assassination is a selective act the chance of innocent civilians being killed in the process is not very high. From an assassin's point of view a political assassination is committed for a just cause.
- Right Intention: "A state must intend to fight the war only for the sake of a just cause. Having the right reason for launching a war is not enough: the actual motivation behind the resort to war must also be

²⁶⁵ Holmes, *op.cit.* p199.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p212.

²⁶⁸ Coates, *op.cit.* p146.

morally appropriate”.²⁶⁹ Yet how can one judge rightness of intention? An assassin has no doubts about his intentions about committing a political assassination and thus the assassins has right intentions.

- Proper authority and public declaration: “A state may only go to war only if the decision has been made by the appropriate authorities, according to the proper process, and made public, notably to its own citizens and to the enemy state(s)”.²⁷⁰ There is no way that this would comply with carrying out a political assassination. It is not possible to make public any intention of carrying out a political assassination. Also, orders for carrying out a political assassination do not come from proper authorities. This does raise the question about what constitutes proper authority. For an assassin from a terrorist group the proper authority could be the leader of the group to a top official within the group. This kind of authority in most cases is not recognised by everyone. Whereas the US government ordering the assassination of heads of states is an authority that is recognised by the entire international community. The question of authority is debatable. Thus, this is major differences between engaging in war and committing a political assassination.
- Last Resort: “A state may resort to war only if it has exhausted all plausible, peaceful alternatives to resolving the conflict in question, in particular diplomatic negotiation”.²⁷¹ A political assassination is usually the last resort that an assassin takes on once the assassin

²⁶⁹ Orend, *op.cit.* p87.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

believes that all other channels have been used. The last resort is to remove the person in order to achieve their goals.

- Probability of Success: "A state may not resort to war if it can foresee that doing so will have no measurable impact on the situation".²⁷² An assassin committing a political assassination thinks that only by killing the victim will there be an impact.
- Proportionality: "The damage to be inflicted and the costs incurred by war must be proportionate to the good expected by taking up arms".²⁷³ An assassin definitely believes in the immense good that would be created by the assassination would be immense and it would be comparable to any other consequences of the act.

Underlying the Just War tradition is a belief that "most actions have some bad consequences, particularly in the area of social and political affairs; the best of policies impose demands upon some persons or ask sacrifices of them".²⁷⁴ If there were supposed to be bad consequences as a result of certain policies an assassin would try to correct this by assassinating the person responsible. In this way the assassin would sacrifice himself. However, "the just war theorists insists on the moral determination of war where that is possible, and on the moral renunciation of war where it is not".²⁷⁵ In a similar way parallels can be drawn with political assassinations. The one thing that is constant in the Just War tradition is that if one engages in war then it should be for the right intention. A political assassination is committed by an assassin who considers

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ Holmes, *op.cit.* p213.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p200.

²⁷⁵ Coates, *op.cit.* p97.

that he is committing such an act for the right reasons. This certainly raises the issue about what is the right reason. Furthermore, "this means that one must intend to promote the good and avoid evil; merely having a just cause and legitimate authority is insufficient".²⁷⁶ The assassins in the cases examined in the thesis believed that a political assassination does just this. By committing an assassination an assassin is promoting good as he has gotten rid of the evil.

According to Michael Walzer states have a moral justification for engaging in armed conflict and in contrast realism rejects such moral concepts. He "suggests that war is the inevitable product neither of the structure of nature nor of the international system rather, war is a human action purposive and premeditated, for whose effects someone is responsible".²⁷⁷ Walzer also states that what states want does not stop at just security but humans want to belong to a community and in this way he tends to disagree with realism.

Walzer discusses in detail the tyranny of war with which a number of parallels can be drawn to political assassinations. He correctly states that "war is most often a form of tyranny".²⁷⁸ Political assassinations can be committed as an attempt to end tyranny in many cases. Furthermore, he states that "war is a social practice in which force is used by and against men as loyal or constrained members of states and not as individuals who choose their own enterprise and activities".²⁷⁹ Political assassinations however are not carried out by and against men as loyal or constrained members of state. In fact it is more of the opposite as political assassinations are directed towards men who have their own endeavour. An important aspect of the tyranny of war is that

²⁷⁶ Holmes, *op.cit.* p200.

²⁷⁷ Orend, *op.cit.* p63.

²⁷⁸ Walzer, *op.cit.* p29.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p30.

“the experience of war as hell generates what might be called a higher ambition: one doesn’t aim to settle with the enemy but to defeat and punish him and, if not to abolish the tyranny of war, at least to reduce the probability of future oppression”. This is similar to the aims of a political assassination. The assassin aims to end tyranny by removing the tyrant and thereby reducing the threat of further oppression as this is the ultimate goal, the assassin will not settle for anything else.

With regard to terrorism Walzer maintains:

the systematic terrorizing of whole populations is a strategy of both conventional and guerrilla war, and of established governments as well as radical movements. Its purpose is to destroy the morale of a nation or a class, to under its solidarity, its method is the random murder of innocent people²⁸⁰

Additionally, “terrorism, because it is directed against entire peoples or classes, tends to communicate the most extreme and brutal intentions—above all, the tyrannical repression, removal, or mass murder of the populations under attack”.²⁸¹ However, with political assassinations the aim is to destroy the oppressor and by no means is the act random. Assassins justify this course of action by saying that the victim represented what they are fighting against. Assassinating the victim will further their cause. This again aligns in with the

²⁸⁰ Ibid. p197.

²⁸¹ Ibid. p203.

concept of strategy where the assassin uses political assassination as a very strategic means to achieve goals. Walzer suggests:

that most political militants don't regard themselves as assassins at all but rather as executioners. They engage, or so they regularly claim, in a revolutionary version of vigilante justice. This suggests another reason for killing only some officials and not other, but it is entirely a self description²⁸²

In the case of a political assassination this certainly is the case. While committing a political assassination an assassin is very discriminate but the reasons behind the assassination maybe based on self description. Finally it is important to remember that, "even in destruction, there's a right way and a wrong way- and there are limits".²⁸³ In most cases of political assassination the ultimate limit is the assassination event itself; however, the political objective of the assassin or the group with which he is associated is usually the deciding factor in stopping at one assassination or in finding it necessary to carry out more. The important point is that an assassin will generally try to avoid killing civilians except for the intended victim. In contrast terrorists are usually less discriminate. Walzer mentions that

in the eyes of those of us whose judgements of oppression and injustice differ from their own, political

²⁸² Ibid., p202.

²⁸³ Ibid., p199.

assassins are simply murderers, exactly like the killers of ordinary citizens. The case is not the same with soldiers, who are not judged politically at all and who are called murderers only when they kill noncombatants. Political killing imposes risks quite unlike those of combat, risks whose character is best revealed by the fact that there is no such thing as benevolent quarantine for the duration of the political struggle²⁸⁴

This pinpoints the reality of a political assassination. Furthermore, he is right in saying that “even if we do not share their judgements, these men are entitled to a kind of moral respect not due to terrorists, because they set limits to their actions”.²⁸⁵ Assassins always target a specific person for or because of specific reasons, therefore an assassin would not arbitrarily decide to kill someone else. Thus an assassin places limits upon the number of events to be carried out. Some people view this as a form of morality as an assassin would not assassinate randomly. Hence, the defence for violence provided by Just War tradition is another way by which political assassinations can be justified.

Furthermore, within Indian political thought one can find parallels to Just War. The Hindu tradition justification for the use of force was can best be understood within the context of the King and his Kingdom. As A.L. Basham states “the recognition of the moral justification of revolt against an impious

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p200-201.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p201.

king must always have acted as some check on his autocracy".²⁸⁶ Therefore, there is moral justification that is sought for engaging in violence. One of the most important books on the practice of statecraft illustrates this claim. The Arthashastra "deals not with the theory of the State, but with the Art of Government and kindred topics".²⁸⁷ It was written by Kautilya (also known as Chanakya) an important figure of the Indian Maurya Dynasty. He was "renowned not only as a king maker, but also for being the greatest Indian exponent of the art of government, the duties of kings, ministers, and officials, and the methods of diplomacy".²⁸⁸ Therefore, the importance of a king's duty is vital. He is referred to as the Holy King.

In the Arthashastra there is a need to

employ as ministers those whose fathers and grandfathers had been ministers before, such persons, in virtue of their knowledge has been ministers before; such persons, in virtue of their knowledge of past events and of an established relationship with the King²⁸⁹

There is stress laid on the kind of people who should be employed by the King. This shows the importance of trust which needs to be established between a King and his officials. It seems the reason for this is to make sure that there is

²⁸⁶ A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India in Ancient Indian Polity: Life and Thought*. p1. <http://www.india-emb.org/section>.

²⁸⁷ U.N. Ghoshal, *A History of Hindu Political Theories, From the earliest times to the end of the Seventeenth Century A.D.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927) p82.

²⁸⁸ Dr R. Shamasastri, *Kautilya's Arthashastra* (Mysore: Mysore Printing and Publishing House, 1967) p5.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p13.

no threat from his most trusted officials. This constant look out for any threat again shows that King was very vulnerable and that all attempts had to be made to protect him.

All duties that are stated by Kautilya are advice that a King should follow in order to keep the enemy away. There was a lot of stress put on looking out for trouble which only illustrated the threat of enemies from outside and fear of being overthrown.

Related to this Kautilya suggested the idea about the institution of spies. He suggested that spies should be created in all areas looking over his ministers and should be found amongst fraudulent discipline, a recluse, a householder, a merchant etc. Kautilya says the spies were “sworn to the King and myself, thou shalt inform us of whatever wickedness thou findest in others”.²⁹⁰ Spies should also be used to watch the citizens and country people. If people were found to be guilty the King would punish by levying taxes. Furthermore, “treacherous opponents of sovereignty shall be silenced”.²⁹¹ Specifically with regards to foreigners Kautilya suggests:

where foreigners carry on an intrigue with foreigners, or local men with local men, there the consequences of the intrigue, unanimously carried on with a set purpose, will be very serious. When the guilt is got rid of, there will be no guilty persons; but when a guilty person is got rid of, the guilt will contaminate others. Hence, when foreigners carry on an intrigue, the king should employ

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p18.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.* p23.

the policy of dissension and coercion.” And also “ then the fiery spies may mix with the servants and soldiers of the abettor (of foreign conspirators) and kill then with weapons, poison, and other means²⁹²

Thus, Kautilya’s advice for a King demonstrates the immense need to protect the king. The intent seems to be that if there is an immediate danger to the King and his Kingdom then all efforts would be made to protect the King and this would include attacking the threat.

Also within Chinese tradition war played an important part in Chinese politics. The Art of War by Sun Tzu provides evidence to show that different regions within China were almost engaged in war with one another. It was so much so that “occasionally the rulers managed too arrange recesses from the endemic wars which were produced by their insatiable ambitions”.²⁹³ Due to the constant nature of war Mo Ti “denounced the crime and futility of the wars to which the rulers of his age devoted their energies”²⁹⁴ He also condemned aggressive war and states that

If a man kills an innocent man, steals his clothing and his spear and sword, his offence is graver than breaking into a stable and stealing an ox or horse. The injury is greater, the offence is graver, and the crime of a higher degree. Any man of sense knows that it is wrong, knows

²⁹² Kautilya’s Arthashastra Book IX ‘The Work of the Invader’. p7.

<http://www.mssc.edu/projectsouthasia/history/primarydocs/Arthashastra/BookIX.htm>.

²⁹³ Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Translated by Samuel B. Griffith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) p21.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. 21.

that it is righteous. But when murder is committed in attacking a country it is not considered wrong; it is applauded and called righteous. Can this be considered as knowing what is righteous and what is unrighteous?²⁹⁵

For obvious reasons this was not a very popular philosophy during this period but it shows that “Warring States rulers who were actuated by the imperatives of power rather than by the adjurations of moralists”.²⁹⁶ Also during this age diplomacy was based on bribery, fraud, and deceit. Espionage and intrigue flourished²⁹⁷ and it demonstrated that it was age were everyone was always aware of the possibility of threat from all directions. As a result the effort was made to keep a watch out for any sort of trouble.

Furthermore, the society during this period had a strict legal code. There were “several thousand crimes were punishable by death or mutilation. Castration, branding, slicing off the nose, chopping off the toes or feet, cutting led tendons, or breaking knee caps were commonly inflicted”.²⁹⁸ Both cases illustrate that violence if aimed at a greater good can be morally justified. The strict legal code for individuals were constructed with the aim that it would prevent further crime. If people were punished for crimes immediately and strictly then in the longer term this would prevent further evil. With regards to the Warring States it was important to attack and kill people if necessary, as this would mean that it would curb any future threat from other states and

²⁹⁵ Ibid. p22.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. p24.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. p23.

prevent greater evil. Thus, moral justifications for violence can be found in different traditions. It is a phenomenon that is not restricted to any particular culture.

Terrorist Justifications

The final justification that can be offered for political assassinations is the justification offered by terrorists. It is simplistic to suggest that the justification can only be derived from the nature of such groups as terrorist ones. A terrorists' justification can also be derived from other arguments or beliefs.²⁹⁹ Justification by religious terrorists is sought from sacred texts and symbols, mythology and especially from religious ideologues. Furthermore, violent acts are not only justified by religious terrorists but in a lot of cases before committing an act consent is sought from religious ideologue. Finally, the act is praised by religious ideologues making such acts glorious deeds. The above discussion is what constitutes terroristic justification.

Closely related to this notion of terroristic justification is the concept of fundamentalism. In most cases individuals or groups that illustrate radical behaviour in conjunction with religion usually get termed as fundamentalists.³⁰⁰ Another term used interchangeably with fundamentalism is extremism. Inherently, fundamentalism is a Western construct. In the eyes of many such groups they are seen not as fundamentalist groups but rather as nationalistic groups where the main aim is to fight themselves. This can clearly

²⁹⁹ The terrorist groups that are referred to are mainly religious and nationalist groups.

³⁰⁰ Further discussion on fundamentalism will follow.

be seen in many of the Middle Eastern groups like HAMAS and Hizbollah.³⁰¹ This is not a phenomenon related to the Middle East but can also be seen in America. Bruce Hoffman states “Half a world away from the Middle East in the heartland of America, the use of violence is similarly justified by theological imperative as a means to overthrow a reviled secular government and attain racial purification and religious redemption”.³⁰² Indeed, “Christianity like most traditions has always had a violent side”.³⁰³ Lawrence Kaplan points out that :

although the term fundamentalism arose from a uniquely American situation among Protestants early in this century, it has been applied to religious movements as diverse as Twelve Imam, Shi'ites, Sikhs and Sinhalese on the Indian subcontinent, Pentecostals in South America, and Israeli settlers on the West Bank, as well as smaller sects throughout the world³⁰⁴

Fundamentalism's origins can be traced to America. Specifically, “the term originated in the USA in the 1920s with the publications of a series of pamphlets called ‘The Fundamentalism of the Faith’”.³⁰⁵ Today the term is used fairly universally to represent most groups that use the fundamental precepts of religion along with violence. In the 1970s in the United States fundamentalism

³⁰¹ See Bruce Hoffmans book ‘Inside Terrorism’ for further information.

³⁰² Bruce Hoffman, ‘Inside Terrorism’, *op.cit.* p105.

³⁰³ Mark Juergensmeyer, Terror in the mind of God, The Global Rise of Religious Violence, (Berkeley: University of California Press:2000) p19.

³⁰⁴ Lawrence Kaplan, Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective (edited) (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992). p5.

³⁰⁵ Steve Bruce, Fundamentalism (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).p10.

reappeared in the more specific form of the Christian Right. Most importantly, religious fundamentalism was also “trying to preserve a way of life”.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, “in the 1980s, coinciding with the election of a conservative president, fundamentalism announced itself as an important influence on the national political scene”.³⁰⁷ It is however correct to say that “the history of right-wing extremist movements advocating violence in the United States is long and well-documented”.³⁰⁸

Broadly speaking John L. Esposito defines fundamentalism in three basic ways. Firstly, “all those who call for a return to foundational beliefs or the fundamentals of a religion”.³⁰⁹ For example the Muslims see the Quran as the word of God. Secondly, “our understanding and perceptions of fundamentalism are heavily influenced by American Protestantism”.³¹⁰ Steve Bruce clearly states that “one distinct belief was the proposition that the Bible was the inerrant word of God and hence that anything that challenge biblical teaching was not just wrong but sinful”.³¹¹ Here again the Bible is seen as the right way to Christian life and teaching. Finally, “fundamentalism is often equated with political activism, fanaticism, terrorism and anti-Americanism”.³¹² This can certainly be seen in fundamentalist groups who often are responsible for committing political assassinations. For example,

³⁰⁶ Bruce, *op.cit.* p68.

³⁰⁷ Kaplan, *op.cit.* p4.

³⁰⁸ Walter Lacquer, The New Terrorism, Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction. (London: Phoenix Press, 2001) p107.

³⁰⁹ John L. Esposito, The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality (New York: Oxford University Press) p7.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Bruce, *op.cit.* 67.

³¹² Esposito. p7-8.

Islambouli the assassin of Anwar Sadat was related to Takfir wal Hijra.³¹³ Thus, the term fundamentalism can be closely related to rigid religious beliefs. One aspect of fundamentalism is the fact that "religion has always been a disruptive force".³¹⁴ Religion has been used by many terrorist groups in the past to justify their acts of violence. Some examples of such groups are the Zealots, Assassins and the Thugs. In this thesis however the effect of the first and the third points are combined. In both the assassinations of Sadat and Rabin the assassins were related to fundamentalist groups who were involved with violence, especially political assassinations.

Fundamentalism in the United States broadly falls under the category of White Supremacists. The three main categories are firstly the Christian Right, secondly the Christian Patriots and finally the various militias. Although these groups are all right wing they do not necessarily share the same beliefs. Some militia share the same religious beliefs as the Christian Patriots like the Aryan Nations, and there are other Militias who do not have any religious inclination, such as the Michigan Militia. While most of them are religious however some are also apocalyptic such as the Branch Davidian.

The main aim of Christian Right identity is to establish a country which reflects the teachings of the Bible. This Gallagher states "religion... is at the heart of many ideologies on the contemporary radical right".³¹⁵ Dan Gayman and Richard Butler are important men associated with the Christian

³¹³ An Egyptian Islamic fundamentalist group established after the 1967 war. It was a direct decedent of the Muslim Brotherhood however the Takfir al Hijra's differed greatly in its attitude to violence.

³¹⁴ Bruce, op.cit. p1.

³¹⁵ Eugene V. Gallagher, "God and Country: Revolution as a Religious Imperative on the Radical Right", in Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 9, Autumn 1997, No. 3.

Right. Both believed in a short interpretation of the teachings of the Bible and God and were followers of the Church of Israel, which upon realising:

that the religious and political right in America is charged with many diverse ideologies, feels an urgent need to point those who desire to be Christians toward a Christ-centered walk in this evil world³¹⁶

Both Gayman and Butler thought that it was therefore up to them to convince people of the direction they should be taking. Furthermore, the Church of Israel's "theology holds that Adam was neither the first created being, nor even the first biped which God placed on the earth." However, "Adam was the first Caucasian, the only bearer".³¹⁷ They believe that "Jews were the result of the seduction of Eve by Satan".³¹⁸ Thereby, "the Jews are the synagogue of Satan and they are believed to have dispossessed the true Israelites".³¹⁹ From all these statements it is easy to see how both Gayman and Butler managed to influence the minds of a number of religious people. It has been stated that "in the United States any group that defines its mission as religious is claiming a very powerful form of legitimacy".³²⁰ This legitimacy often accounts for the justification groups put forward for their actions. Furthermore, Gallagher states that, "many patriots, constitutionalist, militia-members, tax resisters appeal to religion in order to justify their cause" and

³¹⁶ Jeffrey Kaplan, "The context of American Millenarian Revolutionary Theology: The Case of the Identity Christian Church of Israel", in Terrorism and Political Violence. Volume 5, Spring 1993, No 1. p53.

³¹⁷ Kaplan, op.cit. p56.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid. p57.

³²⁰ Gallagher, op.cit. p63.

they include the attempt to identify the essence of a religion through scriptural exegesis, the fabrication of a civil religion to serve political goals and the adoption of fundamental forms of religious expression to underscore the paradigmatic values of certain past events³²¹

From this similarities can be seen with the Christian Right who try to justify their cause through religion, their use of scriptures and the adoption of fundamental forms of religious expression. Christian Identity religious beliefs are pronounced. They believe that Jesus Christ was an Aryan and not a Semite; white Anglo-Saxons are the true Chosen People; the lost tribes of Israel are blue eyed Aryans and the United States is the promised land.³²² This, lends itself to immense racial hatred which was justified by religion.

The Christian Patriot groups are considered to be “militant, anti-federalist or extremists tax-resistance movements”.³²³ Their activities are also coupled with “religious hatred and racial intolerance, masked by a transparent veneer of religious precepts”.³²⁴ Hoffman also maintains that “many militia groups, field manuals and other literature quote liberally from Christian scripture in support of their activities and use biblical liturgy to justify their paranoid call to arms”.³²⁵ They believe in:

- Hostility to any form of government above the county level;

³²¹ Ibid. p64.

³²² For further reference refer to Hoffman ‘Inside Terrorism’.

³²³ Hoffman, ‘Inside Terrorism’. *op.cit.* p111.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

- the vilification of Jews and non-whites as children of Satan;
- an obsession with achieving the religious and racial purification of the United States;
- belief in a conspiracy theory of powerful Jewish interests controlling the government, banks and the media;
- advocacy of the overthrow of the US government or the ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government), as the Patriot/militia groups disparagingly refer to it³²⁶

The bombing of the Alfred P Murrah Federal building in Oklahoma City in April 1995 by a US army veteran Timothy McVeigh fell under the umbrella of the Christian Patriot Movement which “encompasses both racist adherents of what is termed Christian Identity and more traditional Christian fundamentalists”.³²⁷ It was the “Christian Identity ideas were most likely part of the thinking of Timothy McVeigh”.³²⁸ McVeigh believed that the US government had already initiated a programme to control completely the life of every American”.³²⁹ Therefore, this meant that “American liberties are in danger of finally being snuffed out and that they [Christian Patriots] are the only force that can stop it”.³³⁰ McVeigh was immensely influenced by these arguments and interpreted them literally. Furthermore, McVeigh was influenced greatly by the novel The Turner Diaries written by William

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Martin Durham, “Preparing for Armageddon: Citizen Militias, the Patriot Movement and the Oklahoma City Bombing”, in Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 8, No. 1, spring 1996. p65.

³²⁸ Jergensmeyer, ‘Terror in the Mind of God’, op.cit. p31.

³²⁹ Hoffman, ‘Inside Terrorism’, op.cit. p107.

³³⁰ Durham, op.cit. p65.

Pierce.³³¹ The book, which is about a fictional war between the U.S. government and a group known as The Order, details “a ruthless campaign of violence involving the assassination of public officials and prominent Jews, the shooting down of commercial airliners, the poisoning of water supplies and bombings of public utilities”.³³² The Turner Diaries ends with the destruction of many American cities. McVeigh essentially uses the books many precise details as blueprint for the Oklahoma city bombing. He believed that his duty was also to stop the US government and this meant attacking government symbols. The date of the McVeigh attack marked the anniversary of the Waco commune burning, which McVeigh interpreted as an attack on religion. Martin Durham states that “the Oklahoma City, both government investigators and reporters have concluded, was the work of extremists who blamed the government for the deaths at Waco exactly two years before”.³³³

The Evangelical Christian Rev Mike Bray was known for his anti abortion acts. Mike Bray was most influenced by Dominion Theology where the establishment of the Christian Theocratic state. He started several anti abortion fights. Bray justified his act by stating that “Christianity gives him the right to defend innocent unborn children, even by use of force, whether it involves destroying the facilities that they are regularly killed in, or taking the life of one who is murdering them”.³³⁴ Violent acts including killing people associated with abortion clinics was justified by Bray.

Thus, “this history and these biblical images have provided the raw material for theologically justifying the violence of contemporary Christian

³³¹ Andrew Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries* (Arlington: The National Alliance/National Vanguard Books, 1985)

³³² Hoffman, ‘Inside Terrorism’, *op.cit.* p115.

³³³ Durham, *op.cit.* p76.

³³⁴ Juergensmeyer, ‘Terror in the Mind of God’, *op.cit.* p23.

groups”.³³⁵ Furthermore, the discussion on the Just War tradition which had its origins in the Christian Tradition illustrates

the use of the military force under certain conditions, including proportionality-the expectation that more lives would be saved by the use of force than would be lost-and legitimacy, the notion that the undertaking must be approved by an established authority³³⁶

sums up the basic belief of the Christian Identity. There is therefore in this circumstance a close relation between the Christian Identity and the Just War justification for violence. In conclusion, “some modern Christian theologians have adapted the theory of Just war to liberation theology, arguing that the Church can embrace a “just revolution””.³³⁷

Within the Islamic tradition, fundamentalism can be traced back to the time of the Assassins. As discussed before the Assassins carried out their activities with clear religious beliefs in mind which served to justify the acts. In the contemporary world however, “Islamic fundamentalism refers to the modern political movements and ideas, mostly oppositional, which seek to establish in one sense or another, an Islamic state”.³³⁸ Although this desire for an Islamic state has always been a part of this aspiration has been strengthened by modernisation which has been “equated with the progressive westernisation

³³⁵ *Ibid.* p20.

³³⁶ *Ibid.* p25.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ Sami Zubaida, *Islam, The People and The State, Political ideas and movements in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993) p38.

and secularisation of society".³³⁹ This process of westernisation and secularisation has always been limited to a minority of the population whilst the majority of the population refused to accept any such change. As a result "the most forceful manifestations of the Islamic resurgence have occurred in the more advanced and modernised countries of the Muslim world such as Egypt, Iran, Lebanon and Tunisia".³⁴⁰ It was the Iranian Revolution of 1979 that turned world attention towards Islamic fundamentalism and, at the same time, it illustrated that "Islamic fundamentalists could overturn a powerful regime".³⁴¹ Furthermore, the concept of martyrdom glorified in religious terms plays an important aspect of Islamic activities.

Esposito states correctly that "Islamic revivalism has often been seen and experienced as a direct threat to the ideas, beliefs, practices and interests of Muslim secular elites as well as Western governments and multinational corporations".³⁴² This revivalism was greatly felt in the 1970s and 1980s. This can be seen in the history of Islam and by a number of its fundamental precepts. The fundamental aspects of Islam are that "to a Muslim, God is all powerful and all knowing, the creator of all that was and is and will be, the righteous judge of good and evil, and the generous guide to men and women through his messengers and scriptures".³⁴³ Furthermore, it is believed that "God revealed himself through the words He put into the mouths of certain righteous men called Prophets".³⁴⁴ It is these preachings that "have been turned

³³⁹ John L Esposito, The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1992) p8-9.

³⁴⁰ Esposito, op.cit. p10.

³⁴¹ Barry Rubin, Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt (Houndsmill: Macmillian Academic and Professional Ltd) p19.

³⁴² Esposito, op.cit. p10.

³⁴³ Arthur Goldschmidt Jr, A concise history of the Middle East (Boulder, Colorado : Westview Press, c1996) p43.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. p44

into the Quran of the Muslims”³⁴⁵ and is the most important scripture to the Muslims. “The scriptural sources” Arjomand writes “that constitute the fundamentals of Islam are the Quran, the standard version of which was established within a generation after Muhammad’s death, and the Tradition (hadith, singular) of the Prophet”.³⁴⁶ At the same time it is important to note that “if Muslims agree on the authenticity and primacy of the Quran, however, they occasionally differ with regard to its meaning” and “there is no way of taking the entire text of the Quran literally”.³⁴⁷

In Islam reliance on scriptures works in combination with the influence of religious ideologues who hold very important positions in the Muslim world. It will become obvious from the discussion below that “contemporary Islamic thought, particularly in its radicalist variety, accords political struggle and power the most pivotal function in its strategy as a whole”.³⁴⁸ Hasan al Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Sheikh Yasin and Ayatollah Khomeini have produced some of the most important works in Contemporary Islam. They are “not theologians but social thinkers and political activists”.³⁴⁹ Their work has formed the inspiration for several religious ideologues like Sheikh Yasin the spiritual leader of HAMAS (Harakat al-Muqawama al Islamiya) (Palestine) and terrorist groups in the Muslim world such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt) and the Takfir Wal Hijra (Egypt).

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Said Amir Arjomand, “Unity and Diversity in Islamic Fundamentalism”, edited by Martin E Marty and R Scott Appleby in Fundamentalism Comprehended (Chicago University of Chicago:1995) p179-180.

³⁴⁷ Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, Islamic Fundamentalism (Oxford: Westview Press:1996) p 2-3.

³⁴⁸ Youssef Choueiri, “The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements” edited by Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami in Islamic Fundamentalism. (Oxford:Westview Press,1996) p27.

³⁴⁹ Sidahmed and Ehteshami, op.cit. p3.

The establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 accelerated the process of political Islam in Egypt. Hasan al Banna started the institution as a social organisation for education and Islamic reform of society and government from secular and Westernised society. This organisation “more than any other organisation, has been the ideological and institutional epicentre of fundamentalism in the Arab sphere and the Islamic world”.³⁵⁰ Hasan al Banna stated that “ the society of Muslim Brothers would not deviate from Gods’ Book, the Tradition of the Prophet, and the conduct of pious ancestors”.³⁵¹ As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood eventually “developed its own armed secret apparatus and engaged in political assassinations, the most prominent victim being the Prime Minister of Egypt, al Nuqrashi, killed in 1949”.³⁵² This angered the Egyptian government, who in turn ordered the assassination of al Banna. After al Banna died, the Brotherhood suffered from many problems which included not having a strong leadership and no structure. It cannot be however, denied that the secret organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood continued to be “responsible for military training and terrorist activities”.³⁵³

To understand the justifications behind the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood it is essential to understand the beliefs of al Banna. He was a Sufi spiritualist “who possessed a rare ability to evoke mass support by doctrinal complexities into social action”.³⁵⁴ According to Dekmejian, “Banna relied on

³⁵⁰ R Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution. Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse University Press:1985). p73.

³⁵¹ Arjomand, *op.cit.* p186.

³⁵² Zubaida, *op.cit.* p47-48.

³⁵³ Rubin, *op.cit.* p10.

³⁵⁴ Dekmejian, *op.cit.* p75.

the Quran and the six canonical treatise of hadith".³⁵⁵ Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi states "al Banna's understanding of the Quran as an ideological text is far more radical than that of the reform movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth century".³⁵⁶ His "Sufi revivalism could easily be harnessed to jihad movements to extend the frontiers of Islam".³⁵⁷ His movement's characteristics were different from any other revivalist movements as the movement had "(1) an activist ideology, (2) an organisational structure, (3) charismatic leadership, (4) a mass following, and (5) a pragmatic orientation".³⁵⁸ Since al Banna was an anti imperialist and that he considered secularisation as danger to Islam the result was that any act against imperialism and secularisation was justified in the name of Islam. Jihad was his answer to counter the secularisation of Egyptian society and the ulama.

Al Banna stated five problems responsible for the breakdown of the Islamic State which include: "political and religious differences; self-indulgence and luxury; the transfer of authority to non-Arabs; in difference to applied sciences and Muslim infatuation with authority".³⁵⁹ Al Banna was opposed to colonialism and regard Western Christianity to be a tool used by the West to colonise the world. He also saw the importance of materialism in the West which he considers a bad force. As a result, al Banna's associated "Western civilisation with apostasy, licentiousness and adultery, egoism, usury and moral and political bankruptcy".³⁶⁰ The factors above illustrate the reasons why Muslims should start trying to protect and promote Islam. Al Banna

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York Press:1996) p79.

³⁵⁷ Arjomand, *op.cit.* p181.

³⁵⁸ Dekmejian, *op.cit.* p75.

³⁵⁹ Abu-Rahi, *op.cit.* p79.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p81.

suggested that “near Easterners realize the necessity of freeing themselves from the yoke of Western occupation which has curtailed their honor and independence and has imposed upon them heavy sacrifices in money and in blood”.³⁶¹ Thus, the main aspect of al Banna’s teachings were “the oneness of religious world and the lay world, of religion and state; the belief in pan Islamism in the face of Egyptian nationalism”.³⁶² Additionally, al Banna’s main teachings asserted that “every piece of earth on which the banner of Islam is raised is a homeland for every Muslim to protect, work fight for and that just as it is a belief and a worship, [Islam] is a homeland and nationality”.³⁶³ These teachings have been interpreted by radical Muslims to justify participation in violence. It is important to remember that it was al Banna “who first legitimised violence and established a secret organisation [the Muslim Brotherhood] for that purpose, which soon became associated with assassinations and killings during the 1940s and early 1950s”.³⁶⁴ Thus, it does not come as a surprise that contemporary groups use religious scriptures and ideologues to justify violence.

Hasan al Banna’s teachings set the foundations for justifying violence but Sayyid Qutb was an even more influential religious ideologue for the Muslim Brotherhood. Qutb’s works have also influenced many of today’s extremist groups. Qutb “has been called the most famous personality in the Muslim world in the second half of the twentieth century”.³⁶⁵ Qutb’s works borrow much from al Maududi, another prominent ideologue. Qutb joined the

³⁶¹ *Ibid.* p82. Originally cited in *Dawatuna* by al Banna. ..

³⁶² Abdel Azim Ramadan, “Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt: Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups”, edited by Martin E Marty and R Scott Appleby in *Fundamentalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press:1993) p154.

³⁶³ Ramadan, *op.cit* (in footnotes 16) p179.

³⁶⁴ Sidahmed and Ehteshami, *op.cit.* p11.

³⁶⁵ Sylvia G. Haim, Sayyid Qutb in *Asian and African Studies* 16, 1982. p147.

Muslim Brotherhood in 1951 and was put in charge of the da'wa (missionary activity). Qutb, as al Banna, was concerned with the influence and impact of Westernisation on Egyptian society, which was encouraged by Nasser. Qutb believed that "the world is living in Jahiliyya" (pre-Islamic or non Islamic society).³⁶⁶ According to Qutb "Jahiliyya is bound to rear its head whenever people's hearts are devoid of a divine doctrine and their lives cease to be governed by legal injunctions derived from this doctrine".³⁶⁷ This provides a reason for Muslim people to resist Jahiliyya from entering their lives.

Qutb also was also a firm believer of concepts such as hakimiyya (sovereignty) and Kafir (infidel and nonbeliever). Also according to Qutb a believer must:

reject all man-made laws and government, which are the foundations of the new paganism. The true believers, the elect, must organise themselves into vanguard groups apart from the new society of ignorance and repeat the original pattern of establishment of Islam through withdrawal/migration, jihad, and conquest of power³⁶⁸

Qutb believed in the use of force to achieve goals. When a group who considers themselves to be the true believers use violence their justification is derived from Qutb's beliefs.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p155.

³⁶⁷ Choueiri, *op.cit.*p23.

³⁶⁸ Arjomand, *op.cit.* p184.

It was this kind of preaching's that led to the formation of "several takfir (excommunication) organisations in the past two decades".³⁶⁹ It was such groups who state that

after the emigration from the land of Egypt –the land of atheism and abode of war-[true] Muslims would prepare to fight atheistic society and attack the existing political systemso as to take over the reins of authority. Thus the movement would follow the same stages to the historical spread of Islam: call emigration, holy war (da'wa, hijra, jihad)³⁷⁰

Furthermore, Qutb draws on Maududi's political struggle which

called for the establishment of an 'International Revolutionary Party' in order to wage jihad against tyrannical governments. Its members were called 'the functionaries of God' and their duty would consist in wiping out oppression, mischief, strife, immorality, high-handedness and unlawful exploitation from the world by force of arms³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Ibid. p185.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Choueiri, op.cit. p28.

Qutb states that the "Islamic Vanguard has to arm itself with a clear-cut and permanent criterion"³⁷² and this clearly legitimised violence. Additionally, a believer "stands his ground, never runs away, and meets the enemy in open combat. If killed, he is promised martyrdom by God, the highest honor to be gained by a Muslim".³⁷³

Evidence of this can be seen in a interview with *al-Gama'a al Islamiyya* (Islamic group) formed in the 1970s. They were influenced by a number of religious ideologues, from al Maududi to Sayyid Qutb. When asked :

you said that you studied the writings of Sayyid Qutb.

He was a leader of the Muslim Brothers.

Qutb has influenced all those interested in Jihad (holy struggle) throughout the Islamic world. At the time there were many interpretations (turuq) and we need a direction. This Sayyid Qutb's teachings provided³⁷⁴

Evidence of the influence of Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic ideologues can also be found in a number of other organisations like the Islamic Liberation Party and Takfir wal Hijra.³⁷⁵

A number of others have also sought to justify the use of violence of in their teachings such as Sheikh Yasin, the spiritual leader of HAMAS,

³⁷² *Ibid.* p30

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Hisham Mubrak's interview with Tal'at Fu ad Qasim, What Does the Gama'a Islamiyya Want? In *Political Islam, Essay From the Middle East* edited by Joel Benin and Joe Stork.

³⁷⁵ For further reference see R.Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution, Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse University Press, 1985)

Ayatollah Khomeini, Leader of Iran and Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of Hizbullah. HAMAS was founded as a response to the social, political and economic problems faced by the Palestinians. Yasin's own views were "inspired by that of the Muslim Brotherhood societies in Jordan and Egypt, and of the Islamic movement as a whole".³⁷⁶ Yasin states that to "it was his duty as a human being, as a Muslim, as an Arab, and as a Palestinian, since he and large segments of his people have for decades have been suffering under the yoke of an intruding and oppressive occupation".³⁷⁷ He states that "the way to regain Palestine is through the exercise of Jihad, in the sense of a holy war against external enemies".³⁷⁸ It is clear from statements like "the gun is the only means that should be used in addressing the enemy"³⁷⁹ that justification does not need to be interpreted by extremist groups but that justification is given clearly by religious authorities.

Ayatollah Khomeini was responsible for inspiring the Islamic revival that led to the Iranian Revolution. The most important themes of his teachings were the "Shia tradition of struggle against oppression, the investment of political power in the clergy, and a pattern of messianic and utopian expectations".³⁸⁰ The Westernisation by the Shah of Iran was seen as oppressive for the Iranian people and his government was perceived as not respecting Islam and religious scholars. The preservation of Iran from the effects of Western influences was vital to Khomeini. He

³⁷⁶ Ziad Abu Amr, "Shaykh Ahmed Yasin and The Origins of Hamas", edited by Scott Appleby in Spokesmen for the Despised, Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East (Chicago: University of Chicago Press:1996). p242.

³⁷⁷ Amr, Ibid. p235.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p242.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Mark Juergensmeyer, The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State (University of California Press:1994) p53.

reinterpreted Shiism to justify what he called the velayat-I faqih (Rule of the Jurist). This doctrine called for a state by a quasi-infallible rahbar (Leader) who would rule absolutely in his capacity as marja I taqlid, or supreme religious guide of all Shiites³⁸¹

Khomeini believed that martyrdom³⁸² was very important aspect of being Muslim and appealed to start the month of Ramadan (month when the martyrdom of Imam Husayn is celebrated) with “epic heroism... the month in which the leader of the Muslims taught us how to struggle against all tyrants”.³⁸³

The Shah’s leadership fulfilled the criteria of a tyrant as he and Iran seemed to be moving away from the path of religion and Sharia. In order to undermine the Shah’s government “Khomeini and his entourage exploited the cult of martyrs to such an extent than in the popular imagination, the Shah and his police were almost made responsible for the suffering of all the Shia martyrs”.³⁸⁴ Martyrdom was justified through religious terms and it was glorified to encourage Muslims to commit acts of violence. Furthermore, Khomeini was keen to insist that “dying does not mean nothingness: it is life”.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Daniel Brumberg, “Khomeini’s Legacy, Islamic Rule and Islamic Social Justice”, edited by Scott R. Appleby in Spokesmen for the Despised, Fundamentalist leaders of the Middle East (Chicago: Chicago University Press:1996) p17.

³⁸² Martyrdom is a central theme for Shiites.

³⁸³ Brumberg, op.cit. p38.

³⁸⁴ Mehdi Mozaffari, “Islamism in Algeria and Iran In Islamic Fundamentalism”, edited by Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami in Islamic Fundamentalism. (Oxford: Westview Press:1996) p237.

³⁸⁵ Brumberg, op.cit. p40.

Mohammad Abd al-Salam Faraj was another ideologue who overtly promoted the use of violence. He encouraged Muslims to fight enemies, one of whom was Sadat. As a result Faraj espoused ideological motivations for the assassination of Sadat³⁸⁶, this also can be applied to other people who defy Islam. Furthermore, "Faraj argues that the Quran and the hadith are fundamentally about warfare".³⁸⁷ According to Faraj, Jihad was an important duty which involved. Also, he stated that "the true soldier for Islam is allowed to use virtually any means available to achieve a just goal".³⁸⁸ In conclusion, Faraj also stated that a paradise was awaiting all Muslims who was involved with Jihad. Thus, religion easily provides a justification for violence.

Jewish fundamentalism in Israel is usually associated with Abraham Isaac Kook (the father), Zvi Yehuda Kook (the son), Rabbi Meir Kahane and the Gush Emunim (the Bloc of the Faithful), the movement of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. Kook is considered "the most influential theoretician of religious Zionism".³⁸⁹ Kook, the son carried on his father's views. His views however were far more militant in nature and he served as the main spiritual figure for the Gush Emunim. Rabbi Abraham Kook believed that the redemption process began with the establishment of the State of Israel. He stated that "The Zionist return to the land of Israel was the first act of the redemption drama which would soon, in our day, climax with all the glories

³⁸⁶ For ideological motivations see R. Hrair Dekmejian, Islam in Revolution. Fundamentalism in the Arab World. (New York: Syracuse University Press:1985) p94-95.

³⁸⁷ Juergensmeyer, "The New Cold War", p60.

³⁸⁸ Ibid. p60.

³⁸⁹ Mark Tessler, "Religion and Politics in the Jewish State of Israel", edited by Emile Sahliyeh in Religious Resurgence and Politics in the Contemporary World (New York: State University of New York, 1990) p277

that had been foretold about the coming of the Messiah".³⁹⁰ His teachings always reflected the influence of religion and thus really encouraged the promotion of religion. The strongest aspect of his teaching was the importance he placed upon the occupation of the land of Israel. The evidence for this can be found Kook statement: "the hope for Redemption is the force that sustained Judaism in the diasporic, past, the present Judaism of the Land of Israel in the very Redemption".³⁹¹ Kook's son's teachings were dominated by aggressive tones. It was known that Kook was "one of the few Israelis-religious or secular-who dared to express publicly a hostility towards Christianity".³⁹² He was responsible for channelling

the activist energies of his followers, even before the subject of the land arose, into violent actions against missionary institutions in Jerusalem and against Israeli Jews who enjoyed concerts of Christian Music³⁹³

Furthermore, Kook found the withdrawal from any part of Israel unquestionable due to his readings of religious texts which state the "unequivocal and decisive halachic rulings there exists severe prohibitions to pass to foreigners the ownership of any piece of land of Israel, since it was made sacred by the brit bein ha betarim [Abraham's Covenant]".³⁹⁴

³⁹⁰ Arthur Hertzberg, "Jewish Fundamentalism" edited by Lawrence Kaplan in *Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective* (Amherst: The university of Manchester Press, 1992) p155.

³⁹¹ Gideon Arran, "The Father, The Son, The Holy Land, Spiritual Authorities of Jewish - Zionost Fundamentalism in Israel", in *Spokesman for the Despised, Fundamentalists of the Middle East*, Edited by R Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997)p296.

³⁹² *Ibid.* p310.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ Tessler, op.cit. p279.

The teachings of Kook the son were so influential that he was “given the status of da’at Torah, literally “Torah wisdom”.³⁹⁵ This implied that the traditional meaning where the rabbi drew upon holy texts had now changed to the

authority of rabbi to issue binding directives to believers without giving an account of them and without basing them on valid Talmudic evidence. Rather than being justified in terms of the rules of the Torah, the pronouncements now derives its authority from being Torah-inspired³⁹⁶

Jews who followed Kook found that they could now liberally interpret important religious texts to serve their own purpose. It necessary to briefly look at the ideology of Gush Emunim as Kook the son played a significant role in the group. Gush Emunim was a politico-religious movement founded after the Arab Israeli war of October 1973 by “a group of religious fundamentalist Jews in order to prevent a new partition of Eretz Yisrael.”³⁹⁷ Its main objective was the rejudaization of Israel. Gush saw the effect of Westernisation on Israel as corrupting and wanted Israeli society to be governed by the Halakha (Jewish Law). Gush Emunim “wanted to exert influence on the state and went in for violent action –in some cases even for terrorism”.³⁹⁸ It was seen that “in 1980

³⁹⁵ Arran, op.cit. p315.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. p316.

³⁹⁷ Flamhaft, op.cit. p140.

³⁹⁸ Kepel, The Revenge of God. The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p141.

some of its leaders did indeed turn to violent activism, taking the law into their own hands".³⁹⁹ In fact, "Gush extremists fought terror with terror".⁴⁰⁰

Furthermore, studying Jewish fundamentalism is incomplete without analysing Rabbi Meir Kahane who formed the Kach party.⁴⁰¹ ⁴⁰² Kach is considered to be an extremist right wing movement with strong political objectives. Kahane's ideology was a major attack on Gush Emunim as Gush attempts to combine secular nationalism and radicalism. There soon emerged in Israeli society a new concept called Kahanism which denoted, "a blend of ultranationalism, strong anti-Arab sentiment, religiosity, and a demand to respond in kind to Arab terrorism irrespective of the law".⁴⁰³ Kahane was totally against the notion of a secular state as evident from his speeches: "the main position of the party was that Israel should be ruled strictly according to Jewish law, non Jews even secular Jews have no place in this sacred order".⁴⁰⁴ For Kahane, the secular state was representative of a sinful state. If an Israeli leader did not respect God or follow Jewish law then there was nothing sacred about him. He also proclaimed that "the State of Israel was established not because the Zionists who did not repent (!), deserved it, but as a result of the

³⁹⁹ Ibid. p162.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. p162

⁴⁰¹ Kahane's history takes him back to 1968 when he lived in the United States and established the Jewish Defence League (JDL) in New York. Its main purpose was to provide protection to the American Jews who were subjected to various kinds of harassment and crime. In its early years the JDL committed symbolic violence which was within the boundaries of law. In due course, the degree of violence increased by committing violence unaccepted by law. For example, JDL attacked an anti-semitic radio station and in 1970 attacked the Soviet trading company Amtrog. Kahane was given a suspended sentence of five years and soon fled to Israel in 1971. Within a year of his arrival the JDL was back to resorting to acts of violence.

⁴⁰² For further reference on Kahane early life see Raphael Cohen Amagor "Vigilant Jewish Fundamentalism From the JDL to Kach", In Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 4, No.1, Spring 1992. p44-66.

⁴⁰³ Ehud Sprinzak, "Three Models of Religious Violence: The Case of Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel", edited by Martin E Marty and R Scott Appleby in Fundamentalism and the State. op.cit. p478.

⁴⁰⁴ Mark Juergensmeyer, 'The New Cold War', op.cit. p65.

actions of the Gentiles”.⁴⁰⁵ Most importantly, it was created by God and therefore was to remain sacred forever.

“In Kahane's view” Almagor has written “the only authentic Jewish State is a state of Jewish totality”.⁴⁰⁶ Indeed

he called for the creation of a truly Jewish state in Israel rather than a Hebrew speaking gentilized one where people would live according to the Jewish laws⁴⁰⁷

Kahane claimed he did not hate the Arabs rather the problem “was not that they were Arabs but that they were non Jewish living in a place designated by God for the Jewish people from biblical times”.⁴⁰⁸ “Kahane wrote that the Arabs were a time bomb, a malignant disease and that they multiply like fleas”.⁴⁰⁹ He warned against the growth of the Arab population which he believed could destroy the Jewish State from within.⁴¹⁰ Kahane believed in the coming of the Messiah but also believed that the people of Israel had to take active part in the process of redemption. The Palestinian violence is viewed by Kahane as a further means of humiliating the Jews. In response, he proclaimed his own advocacy for the use of violence where

⁴⁰⁵ Ehud Sprinzak, “Violence and Catastrophe in the Theology of Rabbi Meir Kahane: The Ideologization of Mimetic Desire”, edited by Mark Juergensmeyer in Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World. p49.

⁴⁰⁶ Almagor, op.cit. p53.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. p54.

⁴⁰⁸ Juergensmeyer, ‘The New Cold War’, op.cit. p66.

⁴⁰⁹ Rapheal Cohen Almagor, op.cit. p56.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. 57.

Jews were no longer to bow to their oppressors but were called upon to respond to them in kind and with physical force, if necessary. Kahane believed that Messianic redemption which could be achieved in three ways, restoration of biblical land, revival of traditional Jewish law and the building of the temple on the Temple Mount⁴¹¹

Kahane openly proposed that revenge should be sought against the Gentiles even if that involved war. This Kahane supported by saying that “he expressed the opinion of Halakha to violence as claiming that Law permits people to commit violence”.⁴¹² For him the Halakha did encourage committing violence if it would protect the Jewish people from the Gentiles.

The above debate illustrates that religious extremism exists in many forms which can be seen from the several examples that have been already been discussed. It is not a phenomenon that is confined to any one culture but can be found across the board. Also these extremist groups use of violence and then proceed to justify their action through religion. Thus, the role ideologues and holy texts are of most importance.

CONCLUSION

Thus, in conclusion justification for violence can be divided into three distinct categories. Firstly instrumental justification which analyses consequentialist

⁴¹¹ Robert I Friedman, The Sayings of Rabbi Kahane. Feb 13, 1996.

⁴¹² Sprinzak, op.cit. p50.

arguments for justifying violence. Secondly, non-utilitarian justifications for violence when violence is used to prevent further evil. Finally, terroristic violence which specifically examines religious groups. They rely heavily on the preachings by religious ideologues and scriptures.

The thesis also analysed theories such as pacifism which could not justify violence in any form. According to pacifism all acts of violence are wrong. The reason for analysing pacifism was that although a true pacifist would prohibit all kinds of violence there are subdivisions of pacifism such as contingent pacifism where killing committed for self defence can be justified. In conclusion, this theory was rejected on the basis that the main aspect of the theory prohibits violence and if an aspect of the theory does not justify violence then it would complicate the justifications of violence.

This thesis found that the consequentialist/utilitarianist approach was well suited to analyse the justifications for all forms of violence. According to its traditional meaning where an action is right if it promotes happiness. An act of assassination would be right, if the assassination would promote happiness. However, utilitarianism has come to be related not with happiness but the utility of an act. An act is judged on the basis of its utility. An assassin would consider an assassination of immense utility, as it would help achieve desired objectives. Hence, an act of killing in an assassin's term is justified. According to consequentialism one should adopt values whose consequence would result in promoting such values. Similarly, an assassin feels that the consequences of assassination will promote good consequences. If the results of a political assassination were valuable then it would imply that the action was good. It is

therefore possible to base an action as good or bad depending on the consequence.

With the non-utilitarian justification for violence the Just War tradition forms a very important aspect of justifying war. However, moral justification is not only restricted to only the Christian Just War tradition. The chapter illustrated how such justifications are also prevalent in cultures such as the Indian and Chinese cultures.

Finally, terroristic justifications refers to justifications that are offered by terrorist groups. These justifications are presented by religious leaders and texts which are taken very seriously by the assassins. The justifications offered by leaders are not widely accepted by most people and the legitimacy for these justifications are therefore restricted to within the group. As a result these justifications legitimise the actions committed by assassins but they do not help legitimise actions for people outside the group.

After a brief summary of the different moral viewpoints that exist on political assassinations it is still difficult to find one opinion that will justify political assassinations. It would not be correct to suppose that one moral opinion is wrong and the other is right. There are right answers' depending upon what one believes is right. For example if an assassination is proved to be the best means available or if the consequences of an assassination were good then the killing would be justified. As a result this aspect of moral reasoning is a subjective issue. Each approach has its positive and negative aspects and it is a matter of one's own moral judgement to choose the approach that is thought to be morally acceptable. Killing of innocent people in any form can never be justified whether that includes following a rational, consequentialist or

utilitarian approach, just war and terroristic approach. Therefore it is impossible to justify the taking of life whether it is by religion, promoting happiness, ending pain, suffering or development of the society.

Thus, next three case studies will examine the above analysed justifications which include instrumental, non utilitarian and terroristic justifications to see if the cases can be justified. Furthermore, the case studies will also examine whether the killings are political assassinations by comparing it to the definition of Kirkham, Levy and Crotty which state that an assassination can be a political assassination if it contain three specific elements. These are that the victim has to be a prominent political figure, there has to be a political motive and a political consequence of the act. The case studies will also put the assassinations through the classification forwarded by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty to categorise the assassinations. This will illustrate that this particular classification is the most efficient classification available. Finally, the case studies will then examine whether the assassinations succeed as an existential act.

Chapter 3

EGYPT

I am Khalid Islambuli, I have killed Pharaoh and I do not fear death.⁴¹³

Introduction

Anwar Sadat, the President of Egypt, was killed on 6th October, 1981, while he was attending a military parade commemorating the anniversary of his most important military victory in the Sinai peninsula in 1973. He was killed by Lieutenant Khaled Ahmed Shawki al Islambouli, a member of the *al Jihad* organisation, an Islamic fundamentalist group.

In this chapter, the root causes, circumstances and consequences of this assassination are outlined. Consequently, the first part of this chapter plots the contemporary resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt - linking thematically political developments to the growth and strength of fundamentalist groups. Primarily, this section will highlight how Egypt underwent a process of resurgence of political Islam since the 1970s which was characterised by the political aim of at establishing an Islamic state based on the *Sharia* (Islamic law). This arose from the Islamist project developed by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood from the late 1920s on. This vigorous resurgence of political Islam in turn was characterised by a strong critique of the existing political order, and a level of militantism that made the use of violent tactics likely. In addition to the religious justification

⁴¹³John L Esposito, 'The Islamic Threat', *op.cit.* p93.

discussed in chapter 2, this chapter will also underline further religious justifications for the assassination. The chapter will then briefly summarise the assassination event and its consequences.

Historical Background

Egypt under Nasser

It has been “suggested that Egypt is the only real state in the Arab world”.⁴¹⁴ This makes it necessary to understand the different aspects of the state formation of Egypt in its early stages. In other words the growth of Egypt under both Gamal Abdul Nasser and Anwar Sadat. It would inadequate to try and understand Sadat’s assassination without trying to understand conditions within Egypt under Gamal Abdul Nasser, who took over Egypt more than forty years ago in an attempt to establish an authoritarian state. This was nationalist reaction to the imperialist rule in Egypt. Egypt was at a stage when everything was created to serve imperialist interests, “turning the country into a plantation for Western industry and its landed upper class”.⁴¹⁵ At the same time Egypt was also suffering from a number of other problems such as population growth, urbanisation and unemployment. As a result the standard of living fell dramatically. Egypt was also in a state of political instability at the time. From this background rose the need for a nationalist struggle, and groups like the “the Muslim brotherhood, radical nationalists,

⁴¹⁴ Nazih N. Ayubi, Over Stating the Arab State. Politics and Society in the Middle East. (London: I.B Tauris, 1999) p99.

⁴¹⁵ Raymond A. Hinnebusch Jr, Egyptian Politics Under Sadat, The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian –Modernising State. (Boulder: Lynner Rienner Publishers, 1988). p11.

secular leftist - entered the political arena demanding greater nationalist militancy and a redistribution of wealth and power".⁴¹⁶ This culminated in the formation of the Free Officers by middle - class army officers who overthrew the monarchy in the revolution of 1952. They hoped to establish a authoritarian regime. Under such circumstances it was important that the notion of state building within Egypt be handed to a charismatic leader who happened to be Nasser. His policies were heavily driven by radical nationalist desires. Every policy was to be made from above but would be decided by the state. Policy process was very bureaucratic as:

policy making typically took place in small intra-elite arenas such as the Free Officers' inner councils or the cabinet, though occasionally parliament, the press, or interest groups were permitted some input⁴¹⁷

However, things did not run smoothly. The bureaucracy was faced with classical bureaucratic problems such as inefficiency, lack of work ethic and irresponsible attitude. This was followed by the regime founding an Arab Socialist Union in 1962. However, it lacked any "ideological solidarity and organisational muscle, it failed even to serve as an effective instrument of mass mobilisation and policy implementation".⁴¹⁸ Although Nasser did achieve to some extent and succeeded in rebuilding Egypt, his pursuits were not entirely successful. It is believed that

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.* p12.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.* p17.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.* p19.

the very strengths and virtues on which it had risen – powerful charismatic leadership, a development strategy avoiding the worst costs of capitalism and communism, Pan- Arabism – had negative sides and accumulating costs⁴¹⁹

As a result Egypt's institutions seemed too weak to deal with such forces. Therefore, "the decline of Nasirism spawned the forces which would give rise to Sadaism".⁴²⁰

The Muslim Brotherhood

From ancient times, Egypt has occupied a central position in the politics of the Middle East mainly due to the strategic and economic importance of the Suez Canal, and the westernising reforms initiated by Egypt. Furthermore, Egypt is considered to be the home of political Islam in the world, and as a result is often referred to as the "Cradle of Islamism"^{421 422}.

The desire to establish a state based on Islamic law has existed since the early revivalist movements of the Eighteenth Century⁴²³. Egypt has been

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. p29.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ R Hrair Dekmejian, Islam In Revolution, Fundamentalism in the Arab world. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985) p73.

⁴²² The main reason for the rise of political Islam in Egypt has been discussed later on in the chapter.

⁴²³ see, for instance, Youseef Choueiri's chapter on revivalist movements, including Wahabism in Saudi Arabia. Choueiri, chapter 1. Islamic Fundamentalism.

one of the epicentres of Islamic fundamentalism since the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Hasan al-Bana in 1929. This was an institution founded for social and educational reform. The Muslim Brotherhood's "original aim was the reform of hearts and minds, to guide Muslims back to the true religion, and away from the corrupt aspirations and conduct created by European dominance".⁴²⁴ They regarded the Quran as their constitution. In many ways, Egypt during the interwar years was "the focus of conflicting social, economic, political and ideological pressures, which provided a favourable milieu for the rise of the Brotherhood".⁴²⁵ The majority of the population, stricken by poverty, lack of education and housing problems were facing an increasingly strained economic situation characterised by unemployment and lack of government spending on agriculture, trade and business. Ideologically and politically, the Egyptian polity continued to be controlled by the British, leaving the cultural influence of Islam, and previous political structures to prosper underground. As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood grew considerably through the 1930s with many supporters ranging from professionals, bureaucrats, and students to workers and peasants, and it also strongly influenced the army and police. It was able to inculcate the population with a sense of security, identity and belonging.

At the same time, the Brotherhood also developed its own secret apparatus which was responsible for carrying out terrorist activity. After its formative years, the Muslim Brotherhood faced repression on a number of occasions like during the 1948 Palestinian war, when a member of the

⁴²⁴Sami Zubaida, *op.cit.* p48.

⁴²⁵R Hrair Dekmejian, *op.cit.* p74.

Brotherhood shot Prime Minister Mahmoud Fahmi Nuqrashi.⁴²⁶ The repression was a result of the regime sensing for the first time that the Muslim Brotherhood could pose a political threat. The Brotherhood had spread tremendously and needed to be brought under control. This was one of the earliest assassinations carried out by any Islamic fundamentalist group.

Under Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abd al-Nasser, an ideology inspired by Marxist-Leninist social, economic and political principles was developed, making it apparent to the Muslim Brotherhood that, "Nasser did not want to establish an Islamic state but instead promoted a secular Arab nationalism and socialism".⁴²⁷ Initially, the Muslim Brotherhood had supported Nasser's coup, and it was only as it became apparent that Nasser had no intention of promoting the Brotherhood's political platform that the fundamentalists became Nasser's political enemies.⁴²⁸ After assassination attempts on him and his ministers, Nasser outlawed the organisation. Mass arrests and the execution of six members led to the silencing of Islamic fundamentalism.⁴²⁹ However, in early 1964, "Nasserism became encumbered with the Syrian secession, the Yemeni War, and economic problems setting the stage for the Brotherhood's re-emergence".⁴³⁰ Yet again, the regime was threatened by the Brotherhood thousands were put in jail and three of its prominent members were jailed and executed, including Sayyid Qutb, the spiritual leader of the group.

⁴²⁶Nuqrashi assassinations was led to the assassination of Hasan al-Bana on 12 February 1949 by government agents.

⁴²⁷John L Esposito and John O Voll, Islam and Democracy. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) p174.

⁴²⁸For further Reference see, Richard P Mitchell, The Society of The Muslim Brothers, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁴²⁹For Further Reference See, Richard P Mitchell, The Society of The Muslim Brothers, (Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁴³⁰Dekmejian, op.cit. p78.

The failure of secular nationalism

The granting independence of Egypt from the British in 1922 (and subsequently from British and French influence) was a long and difficult process, and thus stood as a unifying symbol of strength, prestige and advantage in terms of state-building.⁴³¹ Consequently, Egypt became recognised as one of the natural leaders of the Arab world upon independence.⁴³² Yet, and paradoxically, this independence was characterised by the secularisation of Egyptian political structures and its cultural identity, exemplified by changes in title from Sultan to king, the constitution being modelled on that of Belgium and the turn towards democracy, and administrative and economic reforms, which led to profound cultural and social change.⁴³³ As Mark Juergensmeyer states,

the secular nation of the day was defined also by what it was not: it was not one of old ethnic and religious identities that had made nations parochial and quarrelsome in the past.⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ Egypt was thought of as an autonomous province but in reality was a British colony. In 1922 Egypt unilaterally declared its independence. After a bitter quarrel a treaty was signed in 1956 terminating British occupation of Egypt.

⁴³² Arthur Goldschmidt Jr, A Concise History of the Middle East. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988) p229.

⁴³³ For Further Reference see, Goldschmidt Arthur Jr, A Concise History of the Middle East.

⁴³⁴ Mark Juergensmeyer, 'The New Cold War', op.cit. p11.

The growth of secular nationalism, associated with the charismatic leadership of Nasser in the 1960s, gave Egypt a whole new sense of personal identity and allegiance to a nation-state rather than to religion, and secular nationalism was regarded as “a supra religion of its own, which a society could aspire to beyond any single religious allegiance”.⁴³⁵ Rupert Emerson acknowledged, however, “that although in the European experience the rise of nationalism coincided with a decline in the hold of religion, in other parts of the world such as Asia secular nationalism moved on and enveloped these regions the religious issue pressed more clearly to the fore again”.⁴³⁶ This has certainly held true for Egypt. Despite the unifying influence of Nasser's strong political leadership, secular nationalism failed to address the economic and political needs of vast sections of society, and more particularly the recently urbanised poor and educated upwardly-mobile sections of the population. Imposed from above, it was perceived as an artificial import from the West.⁴³⁷ In particular, economic development was based upon the theory of modernisation which was further associated with Westernisation and secularisation. When the ideological, political and economic pledges which were the promises of secular nationalism proved to be a failure leading to unemployment, poverty, housing problems and political corruption, faith in secular nationalism, as well as Western models of behaviour, declined. Furthermore, religious leaders such as Sayyid Qutb believed and tried to convince the society that secular nationalism was not good for the people of Egypt as it did not represent people's desires.

⁴³⁵Ibid. p13.

⁴³⁶Ibid. p14.

⁴³⁷See Mark Juergensmeyer, ‘The New Cold War’, *op.cit.*

Religious ideologues like Qutb also held the opinion that secular nationalism posed a great threat to religion.

More specifically, Saad Eddin Ibrahim summarises the main six reasons for the rise of contemporary fundamentalism in Egypt, which reflect the many facets of the failure of secular nationalism. Firstly, the failure of the regime to provide its population with the social equality and justice embodied in its socialist ideology struck at the heart of the urban poor. Secondly, the question of popular participation in the political process remained unaddressed by the regime, especially in terms of the establishment of fair elections. It is in these terms that Muslims fundamentalists highlighted the intrinsic lack of popular legitimacy of the regime, which was neither efficient, nor elected. Thirdly, the competence of the regime in the wise use of resources and in promoting development was widely questioned. Fourthly, the failure of the regime to fulfil its nationalistic promises was glaring, despite Nasser's early flamboyance in securing the Suez Canal and taking diplomatic initiatives with regard to Israel. In fact, the 1967 defeat against Israel came to symbolise the failure of Nasser and of independent Egypt to secure a place as the leader of the Arab world. Fifthly, and in more general terms, the preservation of Egypt's political and economic independence lay at the core of its nationalist identity. Once again, secularism failed because it took on the values of the coloniser it had expelled. In fact, Westernisation symbolised the very opposite of independence. And finally, in cultural terms, the question of balance between Westernisation and the preservation of Egypt's own historic traditions, including Islam, had been inappropriately

addressed through a policy of enforced secularisation without any real economic or cultural benefit for the majority⁴³⁸.

Thus, in the case of Egypt, the failure of Nasser's popular socialism left both a political and an ideological vacuum, which fundamentalists, with their innovative interpretation of the place of religion in public and private life and their vision for political change, filled with ease, with contemporary Islamist ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb introducing a novel way to combine religious beliefs with the struggle for political change, and thus challenging both Westernisation and secular nationalism.⁴³⁹ In fact, it is essentially believed that, "the Muslim countries of the Mediterranean basin and its environs, re- Islamization movements took over from groups inspired by Marxism in challenging the foundation values of the social order".⁴⁴⁰

Catalysts

Nasser's death brought Anwar Sadat to the forefront of the political arena as the new President of Egypt in September 1970. However, Sadat, who lacked the charisma and the popular legitimacy of his predecessor, seemed an unlikely candidate for strong leadership.⁴⁴¹ Many fundamentalists within Egyptian society were pleased with the accession of Sadat, because they

⁴³⁸See Saad Eddin Ibrahim in Barry Rubin Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics, (Houndmills : Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd, 1990) p.4-5.

⁴³⁹The ideology of Sayyid Qutb and other leading Islamist intellectuals is discussed later in this chapter in the context of the connection between religious fundamentalism and the assassination of Anwar Sadat.

⁴⁴⁰Gilles Kepel, The Revenge of God, The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judasim in the Modern World. (Polity Press, 1994) p13.

⁴⁴¹John L Esposito, 'The Islamic Threat', op.cit. p94.

thought of him as weak and easy for them to control.⁴⁴² However, in time Sadat was to prove that he was difficult to manipulate, shrewd and politically confident. He realised the importance of Islam in society, and increased the building of mosques, while the media began coverage of his praying in the mosques. Islamic learning became a compulsory subject and in 1971 Islam was declared the official religion of the state and Shariah was declared a source of legislation. All these were political moves in order to gain religious legitimacy. However, in an attempt to counter the growing socialist opposition he made the mistake of releasing many members of the Muslim Brotherhood from prison and encouraged them to join student unions, and other associations in society, thus allowing them to function properly.⁴⁴³ The basic aim was to counter the socialist influence, and at the same time establish Sadat's legitimacy as a ruler. Instead, releasing the Brothers from prison fuelled fundamentalist tendencies leading to violence that would become difficult to control in the future.⁴⁴⁴

Working backwards chronologically, several catalysts for the assassination of Sadat can be identified. In short, it was a political agenda backed by religious motives that eventually led to Sadat's elimination. However, closer scrutiny shows a chain of events combining a complex array of political errors, matched with the mismanagement of the growth of fundamentalist groups and of their increasingly militant and oppositional ideology.

⁴⁴²For further Reference See, Hirst David and Beeson Irene, Sadat, Chapter One, The Crossing (Faber and Faber: London, 1981).

⁴⁴³ For further reference see, R Hrair Dekmejian Chapter Six, Egypt.

⁴⁴⁴Sadat signed his death warrant 10 years ago, 10/11/1981. Indian Express (New Delhi).

Political choices

After a reasonable amount of success in the 1973 war, policies initiated by Sadat marked a reversal of economic and social policies instigated by his predecessor, as well as changes in leadership style reflected in a different diplomatic posturing. Firstly, Sadat initiated an open door economic policy (*infitah*) which aimed at liberalising Egyptian economic activity by encouraging the growth of an independent private sector. Furthermore, a step was taken towards democratisation and freedom of the press and freedom of expression were encouraged. Additionally, in 1976, Sadat reintroduced the multiparty system which was still restricted to three parties, excluding the Muslim Brotherhood and Nasserites⁴⁴⁵. Secondly, Sadat turned away from the Soviet Union and turned towards the United States, and full diplomatic relations were established between the two in 1974, and "the years between 1974-1977 witnessed what may be called a honeymoon in Egyptian-American relations, and most Egyptians welcomed it".⁴⁴⁶ This so-called honeymoon was to be shaken by the 1977 food riots, which were sparked off because of the steep rise in prices and cut in government subsidies. These resulted in a severe blow to the power and prestige Sadat had accumulated up until that point. Finally, the most important change was towards peace with Israel. This was a total reversal of Nasser's policies, which supported a policy of limited war. The Camp David Accords and the signing of the peace treaty in 1979 were events which were not welcomed by many Egyptians. Finally,

⁴⁴⁵Sadat's own party 'Egypt Arab Socialist Party', the right 'The Liberal Right' and the left 'The Unionist Progressive Party'.

⁴⁴⁶Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Domestic Developments in Egypt", edited by William B Quandt in The Middle East, Ten Years After Camp David. (Washington D.C, The Booking Institution, 1988) p26.

Sadat made the diplomatic miscalculation of supporting the Shah of Iran and denouncing the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, prompting internal dissent among many Muslims at home and abroad, many of whom could hardly be classified as fundamentalists. Though Sadat used religion to legitimise all his policies starting from the 1973 Palestinian war, Islamic fundamentalist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood saw Sadat as moving away from the path of religion and they became some of his foremost critics. In fact, "Sadat was seen by his critics as a prime example of Egypt's Westernised elite in both his personal and his political life".⁴⁴⁷ In retaliation, Egypt was struck by a number of attacks in bars, cinemas, theatres and night-clubs, which expressed the fundamentalist grievances.⁴⁴⁸

Fundamentalist resurgence

The Muslim Brotherhood grew in strength with the backing of the government. It resumed its publications and for a brief period denounced violence and opted for a policy of working for change. "The militants believed that the liberation of Egyptian society required that all true Muslims undertake an armed struggle, or a holy war, against a regime which they regarded as oppressive, anti-Islamic and a puppet of West".⁴⁴⁹ The mid-1970s witnessed the emergence of other radical Islamic groups like *al Takfir wal Hijra* (Excommunication and Emigration), Islamic liberation Party (the military technical college organisation) and *Tanzim al-Jihad* (the Jihad Organisation, formed from the remnants of Islamic *al-Jihad*). *Takfir wal*

⁴⁴⁷ John L Esposito, 'The Islamic Threat', *op.cit.* p95.

⁴⁴⁸ For further reference see, R Hrair Dekmejian, Chapter Six, Egypt.

⁴⁴⁹ Esposito, 'The Islamic Threat', *op.cit.* p95.

Hijra was a splinter organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood and shared the ideology of Hasan al-Bana and Sayyid Qutb. The leader of the organisation was Shukri Mustafa.⁴⁵⁰ It fought against the state, which it considered to be infidel, and fought for the establishment of an Egyptian Islamic state. This group followed the pattern of withdrawing from society and establishing their own community based on the five pillars of Islam. Once this was established they planned to return to civilisation to try and conquer it. This group was responsible for the killing of ex-minister of religious affairs Muhammed al Zhababi, and the regime arrested many members and Mustafa was executed.⁴⁵¹

The Islamic Liberation Party was formed in 1974 under the leadership of Salih Abd Allah Sيريyya, a Palestinian. The ideology of Sayyid Qutb like *hakimiyya* and *takfir* held special importance. The group believed in first reforming the individual and then turning to society.⁴⁵² The group failed to take over the technical military college in 1974.⁴⁵³ Al Jihad was founded in 1978 and was far more radical. It was able to exert influence in the military and government institutions. Its most important feature was that it was led by a collective leadership as opposed to a single leadership. The main ideologue

⁴⁵⁰For further reference see, R Hrair Dekmejian, Chapter Four, *Islamist Ideology and Practice*.

⁴⁵¹For further reference see, Saad Eddin Ibrahim in Barry Rubin *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*. Captor Two, Contemporary History of fundamentalism in Egypt. *op.cit.*

⁴⁵²For further reference see, Abdel Azim Ramadan, "Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt: The Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups", edited by Martin E Marty and Scott R Appleby in *Fundamentalism and the State*, *op.cit.*

⁴⁵³For further reference see, Abdel Azim Ramadan, 'Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt: The Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups', *op.cit.*

was Abd al Salam Faraj.⁴⁵⁴ It was responsible for the assassination of Sadat, which was followed by large - scale arrests of its members.

It was at this point of resurgence that Sadat realised that his "Islamic initiative proved counterproductive as he discovered what many have realised in other contexts - that reliance on Islam for political legitimacy is a two edged sword, capable of legitimating, of mobilising support but also of mobilising opposition".⁴⁵⁵ The common thread in all these different groups was the ideology which was very similar to that of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the goal of Egyptian Islamic groups was "the creation of an Islamic state headed by a pious Muslim and enforcing Islamic law and social justice".⁴⁵⁶ Thus,

while the general trend of returning to Islam aims to correct the society in a step by step fashion and to instil the values of the religion as a way of life, the extremist Islamic organisations have turned the phenomenon into a lever to fulfil political aims - whether through democratic process in order to gain power by legal means, or through terrorism and other illegal means.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ For further reference see, Mohamed Heikal, Autumn of Fury, The Assassination of Sadat, (London: Andre Deutch, 1983) Part 4, Thunderstruck.

⁴⁵⁵ John L Esposito and John O Voll, Islam and Democracy. op.cit. p175.

⁴⁵⁶ Hinnebusch. op.cit. p200.

⁴⁵⁷ Internet, Background Material, The Threat of Islamic Fundamentalism. gopher://israel-info.gov.il: p2.

One of the first attacks by an Islamic fundamentalist group, the Islamic Liberation Organisation, was on the Technical Military Academy in April 1974, and the next important event was the kidnapping and murder of the religious scholar and ex-religious affairs minister Husayn-al Dhahabi in 1977 who was “strangled and shot through the left eye, a ritual form of execution”⁴⁵⁸ by *Takfir al-Hijira*. This led to the suppression of the two groups and emergence of *Jamaat al Jihad* (Holy War society).

Religious Justification

The main religious aims underpinning Sadat's murder cannot be overlooked. The fundamentalists' motivations possessed a strong messianic component. Irrespective of which group was responsible, it was obvious that “the aim was to commit an outrage for God”.⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore, the victory in 1973 was attributed to the fact that God wanted the Islamic people to win, and even on the anniversary, God supported the fundamentalists: he also wanted Sadat dead. David Rapoport very significantly points out that, “the decision by *Al-Jihad* to use the trial in order to affirm responsibility seems with the spirit of the early sacred terrorists”.⁴⁶⁰

The teachings of Sayyid Qutb and Abu Abd al Faraj provide the guiding force of many contemporary fundamentalist organisations in the Muslim World, including the ones outlined above. Sayyid Qutb was associated with the Muslim Brotherhood but his ideology was also followed by members of *Takfir al Hijra* and *al Jihad*. He was responsible for the re-

⁴⁵⁸Behind the Gunmen, *Newsweek* October 19, 1981 p36.

⁴⁵⁹Cult That Killed Sadat Has Deep Roots. *Los Angeles Times* 26/10/1981.

⁴⁶⁰David C Rapoport, ‘Sacred Terror’, *op.cit.* p129.

emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1960s which contributed to the intensification of Islamic radicalism as a challenge to the existing political order. Qutb was of the opinion that the West, secular states, communists and Jews were all trying to destroy Islam, the only true religion in the world. Muslims who associated themselves with foreign concepts like secular nationalism, democracy and communism were not true Muslims. In other words, "Islamic radicalism is a politico-cultural movement that postulates qualitative contradiction between Western civilization and the religion of Islam".⁴⁶¹ As a result, a true Islamic society does not exist and now has to be created. "Islamic societies as a whole, the radicalists argue, have renounced their religion and relapsed to a state of ignorance (jahiliyya), not unlike that which flourished before the rise of Islam in Arabia".⁴⁶² Qutb claims, "it is an intellectual and spiritual temper that becomes preponderant whenever those fundamental values, sanctioned by God for humanity, are replaced by artificial ethics based on temporary whims".⁴⁶³ Furthermore, "jahiliyya, or pagan ignorance, becomes a psychological state which rejects God's guidance, and a system that refuses to conduct its affairs according to God's commands".⁴⁶⁴ Furthermore, Qutb claimed that obedience to a ruler was dependent on the establishment of the Sharia by the ruler. The ultimate struggle was between truth and falsehood. Therefore, it was a duty of the dedicated Muslim to wage a Jihad or Holy war against a sinful person or society. "The underlying notion of war against such evil enemies, domestic

⁴⁶¹ Youssef M. Choueiri, *The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements* edited by Anoushiravan Ehteshami in *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) p123.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.* p92.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.* p94.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p22.

and external is distilled in the quintessential notion of Jihad".⁴⁶⁵ He repeatedly cited the example of Muhammad's emigration to Medina and then back to Mecca for Jihad; that is, "he considered it imperative that Muslims emulate the prophet to constitute a strong vanguard as a prelude to the final victory- the establishment of God's sovereignty on earth."⁴⁶⁶

Muhammad Abd al Salam Faraj played an instrumental part in the assassination of Sadat. He was the ideologue of the *al Jihad* group and advocated radicalism in ideology and violent tactics. According to him, "the duty that has profoundly been neglected is *Jihad* and it calls for fighting which means confrontation and blood".⁴⁶⁷ Sadat's assassin Islambouli was influenced by the ideologies of both Qutb and Faraj, but the influence of Faraj was more significant. In a nutshell, he believed that Sadat was an apostate. Islambouli stated that his actions were noble, and that if the leader is evil, then violence against him is justified. Islambouli believed that "the greatest prize for a believer is salvation, and to kill and be killed in the cause of God".⁴⁶⁸ Islambouli lived in a politically active environment and was influenced by violent speeches of Faraj who headed a cell of the Jihad movement. The role of religious leaders was important in radicalising the population to support them. This kind of sentiments grew mainly in the Ahli mosques which can be seen as a haven for fundamentalists. Faraj and Islambouli came in contact with each other in such a mosque and the latter was influenced by Faraj's idea of killing an apostate leader. Faraj believed Egypt was being ruled by secular laws in a country where the majority of the

⁴⁶⁵ Raphael Israeli, "Islamikaze and their Significance", in Terrorism and Political Violence Vol.9, No.3. (Frank Cass, 19997)p 109.

⁴⁶⁶ Dekmejian, op.cit. p87.

⁴⁶⁷ Juergensmeyer op.cit. p60.

⁴⁶⁸ Heikal, op.cit. p247.

population was Muslim. He proclaimed that "if the rulers are hypocritical Moslems as the Tartars had been in Ibn Tamiya's day, they should be eliminated".⁴⁶⁹ In this context, Sadat was a hindrance to the establishment of the Islamic state, and he had to be removed. This is evident from the that Islambouli stated he had not committed any crime and that he "... thought of only God."⁴⁷⁰

However, it must be noted that these religious motives remained grounded in an understanding of recent political events which form an intrinsic part of Islambouli's motivation. The political reasons stated by Islambouli can be summed up thus: firstly, "the inconsistency between Egypt's existing laws - a fact which brought suffering upon the Muslims. (2) Sadat's peace with Israel. (3) the arrest, persecution, and humiliation of Islamists in September 1981".⁴⁷¹ This is a particularly crucial point, as the assassination took place within a month of Sadat's arrest of 1500 fundamentalists including Muslims and Coptic Christian religious leaders. In fact, Islambouli's brother, Muhammed al-Islambouli was a member of *Takfir Wal Hijra* was arrested with other Muslim fundamentalists.

The Assassination

As already discussed, Egypt witnessed new reforms and moves but did not reap the results expected and instead it backfired. For example, support for capitalism, the turn towards the United States, and the Camp David Accords of 1979 were not compliant with Islamic law. This prompted an upsurge in

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p248.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p253.

⁴⁷¹ Dekmejian, *op cit* p94.

fundamentalist militantism which Sadat took firm action against on a number of occasions. In 1979 for instance he publicly issued warnings to the Muslim Brotherhood and suspended the publication of the *al Dawah* and *al I'Tisam*, the Brotherhood's journals. Yet, at the same time, he built a number of mosques, and religion became a compulsory subject in school, thus continuing Sadat's trend in claiming legitimacy by maintaining the monopoly in and control over the religious sphere.

Anwar Sadat was assassinated on October 6, 1981 at a military parade. The day held special significance as it was the anniversary of his greatest military victory in 1973. It all happened when, one of a fleet of trucks, came to a sudden halt. The general view was that the truck, which was supposed to carry artillery, seemed to break down. Then, six to eight soldiers came running toward the presidential reviewing stand and started to fire. Anwar Sadat was hit, and was pronounced dead a little over an hour after the shooting. However, one clear point was that Sadat's assassins were Islamic fundamentalists and "the attack on Sadat and his party was swift and shocking, occurring toward the end of what seemed to be a spectacular military parade".⁴⁷² Initially, the group suspected was *Takfir al Hijra*, however, the group finally found responsible was *al-Jihad*. Another prime accomplice was Lieutenant Colonel Abbud Abd al-Latif Hasah al-Zumur who was in operational command. It is well known that clerical sanction is a necessary component of any violent act, but in this case the assassination was sanctioned by either by Faraj or Islambouli. There is also evidence that *al-Jihad* had considerable support from within the military, the security services

⁴⁷² He Moves to Assume Real Authority. Los Angeles Times 7/10/1981.

and governmental organisations this is proved by the fact that Islambouli was in the military, assuring easy access to the President.

Further conclusions can be drawn from the circumstances surrounding the assassination. Firstly, Faraj and Zumar had on a number of occasions considered killing the President, but with the appointment of Islambouli to participate in the 1973 October celebration, they took the opportunity seriously and carefully planned the assassination event. This illustrates clear premeditation to carry out the plan under the best possible conditions. Secondly, the significance of the time and place was essential, as it was in October 1973 that the Egyptian army crossed the Suez Canal and broke through Israel's Bar-Lev Line in Sinai, proving Sadat's authority and prestige. The symbolic significance of the date and location of the assassination was thus central. Additionally, the act was committed in front of a significant crowd to publicise their cause well known and thereby gain supporters. Yet, at the same time, efforts were made by the fundamentalists to create fear amongst the officials, which might have resulted in the regime agreeing to some of their demands.

Consequences

The aftermath of the assassination was to prove difficult for Hosni Mubarak, the new President of Egypt. He was expected to deal with the consequences of both Nasser and Sadat's policies. "Mubarak's job was never going to be an easy one, as he needed to deal simultaneously with the economic crises and

with Islamic radicals".⁴⁷³ On the other hand, the goal of the fundamentalists was to renew Islam and establish an Islamic state, which they have still not achieved. The peace treaty with Israel still exists and considerable efforts have been made to build a durable Peace Process, particularly since the early 1990s. The assassination of Sadat led to arrests and execution of individual members, but it marked a halt in the activities of the Islamist groups.⁴⁷⁴ The three main fundamentalist groups remaining are the Muslim Brotherhood, *Al Jihad* and *Al-Takfir w'al-Hijra*. Although at present the fundamentalists may not be capable of seizing control of the state, they are capable of challenging the political order politically and through violence. Consequently, one of the priorities of the regime remains to control the growth and virulence of these groups. At the same time, it is important to remember that fundamentalism also arose due to socio economic problems which remain to be addressed.

In this sense the problem of the Muslim Brotherhood remains preoccupation, for it is perceived that, "this whole problem of terrorism throughout the Middle East is a by-product of our own, illegal Muslim Brotherhood".⁴⁷⁵ After the accession of Hosni Mubarak, the regime took a path of appeasement towards the Brotherhood by releasing its supreme guide Omar al-Tilmassni and other members.⁴⁷⁶ The regime allowed the Brotherhood to resume some of its activities in order to counter balance the other radical fundamentalist groups in society. The regime believed that if

⁴⁷³Nazih N Ayubi, *The State and Public Policies in Egypt since Sadat*. (Reading: Itnaca Press, 1991) p229.

⁴⁷⁴For further reference see, Saad Eddin Ibrahim in Barry Rubin *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics. Captor Two, Contemporary History of fundamentalism in Egypt. op.cit.*

⁴⁷⁵Joel Campagna, "From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years", in *Journal of International Affairs*, op.cit. p298.

⁴⁷⁶For further reference see, Ramadan Abdel Azim, 'Fundamentalist Influence in Egypt: The Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups', op.cit.

the Muslim Brotherhood could be controlled then this would help to keep at par the other fundamentalist groups or prevent new groups from emerging. With the relative freedom that the Brotherhood gained they refrained from violence and attacking the government, and tried to increase their involvement in social activities like providing food and relief after the earthquake in 1992, distributing money for educational programmes and building houses.⁴⁷⁷ This was aimed at increasing support for the group among the population as well as providing political legitimacy.

The Brotherhood made its way into the political arena through an alliance with the Wafd party, and in the 1984 elections gained 15 per cent of the votes and 13 per cent of the seats.⁴⁷⁸ At this point the Brotherhood started to voice its goals more openly and stated that its ultimate aim was the promulgation of *Sharia* as the law of the land. In the 1987 elections, the Brotherhood's success continued and it began to infiltrate the professional, student and other similar associations which gave it legitimate means to express their political aims. These associations provided the Brotherhood with huge financial benefits.⁴⁷⁹ This proved to constitute a renewed political threat to the regime. With a partially legitimate political stand, the Brotherhood began to openly criticise the Peace Process. Allegations arose of connections between the Muslim Brotherhood and other radical fundamentalist groups which resorted to assassinations and other terroristic activity on behalf of the Brotherhood. For instance, the 1992 attack on

⁴⁷⁷For further reference see, Campagna Joel, "From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years", in *Journal of International Affairs*, summer 1996, 50, No 1, p292.

⁴⁷⁸Nazih N Ayubi, 'The State and Public Policies in Egypt since Sadat', Chapter 10. *op.cit.*

⁴⁷⁹For further reference see, Joel Campagna, "From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years", *op.cit.*

tourists and the assassination of Faraj Foda by Islamic Militants were not criticised by the Brotherhood.⁴⁸⁰ Predictably enough, the Mubarak government soon found itself in confrontation with the Brotherhood. Consequently, various laws were passed to restrain the Brotherhood's activities such as their role in associations and in the election process, and to lessen their support within the population. In 1995, as the elections approached, harsh methods were employed against the Brotherhood and 1,392 Islamist supporters and poll watchers were arrested, and 81 Muslim Brothers were prosecuted as the regime was threatened by its own decline in legitimacy.⁴⁸¹ Thus, today, "...the government had decided to reduce the Muslim Brothers influence and deal with them in their official capacity of being an illegal movement, although it had tacitly permitted them to operate in the past few years".⁴⁸² Though these groups still remain small they show signs of breaking free and gathering wider support among the population.

Having examined the case study, an attempt will now be made to draw the threads together and to offer explanations of, and justifications for, the political assassination.

The three questions that were mentioned in the introduction will be analysed in turn. These were:

- Can the assassination analysed in the thesis be categorised as a political assassination?

⁴⁸⁰See, Joel Campagna, *op.cit.* p289.

⁴⁸¹See, Saad Eddin Ibrahim *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*. Chapter Two in, "Contemporary History of fundamentalism in Egypt", *op.cit.*

⁴⁸² Joel Campagna, *op.cit.* p302.

- Can the justifications that are analysed justify the political assassination in this thesis?
- Can political assassination ever be successful as a political strategy, or is it only successful as an existential act?

Let us begin with the first question.

Can the assassination analysed in the thesis be categorised as a political assassination?

In Chapter One, we established that Kirkham, Levy, and Crotty is the most accurate as it focused on the reasons behind assassinations as opposed to the other typologies such as those offered by Richard B. Laney, Oscar Jaszi and James W. Clarke which did not really address issues such as motives. Laney's classification does not address the three factors of the victim being a prominent figure, the political motive and political consequences. Furthermore, the classification has certain factors, such as the number of assassins, which do not contribute to the understanding of what constitutes a political assassination. Jaszi's classification confuses the two issues of political assassination and political murder. Political murder is an ambiguous term, but strictly speaking, means the premeditated killing of an individual or group of individuals in order to get, maintain, or extend the power of the state in the interest of an individual or group. When the killing is directed at well - defined individuals, it would be more correct to speak of political assassinations. Since there is a difference between the two it would not be

accurate to adopt a classification that combines the two things. Clarke's classification focuses on the type of assassins: that is, whether they are psychopaths or have aggressive behaviour. This type of classification cannot offer a sound basis to the understanding of what constitutes a political assassination.

Most importantly, the classification by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty does address the three important elements, i.e. prominent figure, political motive and political consequences that are needed for an assassination to be classified as a political assassination. Kirkham, Levy, and Crotty classified assassinations into five main categories. These were: elite substitution - the assassination of a political leader without a major systemic or ideological change visualised; tyrannicide - the assassination of a despot in order to replace him with a better, usually less oppressive, more rational ruler; terroristic - assassination on a mass and indiscriminate basis in order to demonstrate the government's inability to rule, or to let a minority govern a majority; anomic - assassination of a political figure for private reasons; and propaganda by deed - assassination which aims to direct attention to a specific problem. This is, however, the most appropriate classification that exists. The classification would be improved if elite substitution actually implied the assassination of a political leader in order to effect major systemic or ideological change. This thesis therefore will consider elite substitution to be the assassination of a political leader with a major systemic or ideological change visualised. Furthermore, terroristic assassination does not necessarily mean that it has to be on a mass and indiscriminate scale. In fact a political assassination in most cases is going to target one individual and it is unlikely

to be on a mass level. Therefore, in this thesis terroristic assassination will imply the political assassination of an individual in a discriminate way by terrorists. This typology will thus be more effective. Each type of political assassination mentioned by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty has its own distinctive characteristics but for the assassinations examined in this thesis to be categorised as political this thesis will try to explain which one is most suited and why.

Sadat's Assassinations

With regard to the assassination of Anwar Sadat, from its characteristics that it is more suited to the tyrannicide and terroristic categories, and to a lesser degree to elite substitution. Elite substitution maintains that the assassination should always be directed towards a political figure with a major systemic or ideological change being visualised. This category further refers to a power struggle when a particular leader is assassinated and replaced by someone else from an opposing group at the same level. With regard to the assassination of Sadat, elite substitution is significant as the assassination was directed against a political figure and a major systemic change was visualised. Sadat was the President of Egypt and by assassinating him, the assassins hoped to reverse his policies. All the policies pursued by Sadat were seen as opposing Egyptian interests. More importantly, all of Sadat's policies illustrated that Sadat was moving away from the true path of religion. Sadat, however, was not assassinated in order from him to be replaced by another leader of the opposition. There was no such vision at the time. With respect to tyrannicide,

it is important to remember that from an assassin's point of view Sadat was a tyrant. This is because Sadat tried to impose policies that could be viewed as dictatorial. Also, moving Egypt from the true path of religion was a sign of a tyrant according to the assassins. Tyrannicide was definitely not the nature of Sadat's assassination. He was not a despot. Sadat attempted to liberalise the society. A despot would never attempt to initiate policies that would liberalise society. His main fault was that he initiated policies that did not appeal to a small group of the population, namely the extremist population. There was no endeavour to replace Sadat by a better, less oppressive and more rational ruler. As a result, the assassination cannot be termed a case of tyrannicide. Furthermore, the political assassination of Sadat was not entirely terroristic according to the definition provided by Kirkham, Crotty and Levy. That is, the assassination was not on a mass and indiscriminate basis in order to demonstrate the government's inability to rule, or to let a minority govern a majority. There was no attempt to demonstrate the government's inability to rule because the perpetrators already believed that the government could not rule and that the Egyptian people were aware of it. Furthermore, there were no intentions of letting a minority government rule by assassinating the President. The assassination of Sadat was terroristic in so far as the assassin was a member of a terrorist group called the *al-Jihad*. It was carried out in a discriminate fashion against a political figure. Therefore, the political assassination of Sadat can be categorised as a terroristic assassination according to the definition put forward earlier. Anomic assassination is the most far-fetched of all the categories with regard to the assassination of Sadat. Although, anomic assassination is directed towards a political figure the

assassination is carried out for private reasons. Any such assassination does not classify as a political assassination. It completely undermines the concept of an assassination being termed political. Finally, the assassination cannot be categorised as propaganda by deed, because the assassination was not aimed at directing attention to a particular problem. The aims of the perpetrators were to put an end to the policies initiated by Sadat and to take Egypt back on the path of religion. As a result, the political assassination cannot be categorised as propaganda by deed. Thus, the assassination in question may be classed as an example of elite substitution and terroristic assassination.⁴⁸³

Can the justification that are analysed justify the political assassinations in this thesis?

With regard to the consequentialist/utilitarianist debate examined previously, it was shown that the debate focuses on the consequences of the act. If the consequence of an act promotes happiness, then the act is justified. Similarly, with regard to utilitarianism if an act leads to greater utility, then the act is justified, as discussed above. Therefore, according to both the above claims, a political assassination would be justified if it promoted happiness or led to greater utility. The claims, however, made by the assassins in each case illustrate similar arguments. In all three assassinations the assassins Islambouli, Amir and LTTE committed the assassination with the

⁴⁸³ For further reference of the conditions in Egypt prior to the assassination look at Hrair R. Dekmejian 'Islam in Revolution, Fundamentalism in the Arab World, John. L Esposito 'The Islamic Threat', Raymond A Hinnebusch 'Egyptian Politics Under Sadat. The Post – Populist Development of an Authoritarian State' and Youssef Choueiri 'Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements' in Islamic Fundamentalism. Also my own contextual discussion in the case studies will provide a comprehensive background to the assassination.

understanding that the deaths of their victims would lead to happiness and greater utility. However, in each of the cases this was not achieved and in this respect the consequentialist/utilitarianist debate failed to meet the claims of the debate. This will become clear in the following discussion.

Consequentialism / Utilitarianism

According to consequentialism the assassination of Sadat cannot be justified because the consequences of the act were not good for the whole society. Sadat was a major threat to Egyptian society, according to certain sections of the population. He was responsible for taking Egypt away from the path of Islam. Furthermore, Sadat was assassinated because he had extended friendly relations with Israel, an enemy of all Islamic states. This was not felt by the entire Egyptian population but only by the fundamentalist population of Egypt. This implied that the assassination of Sadat cannot therefore be justified. According to utilitarianism the assassination of Anwar Sadat cannot be justified. All versions of utilitarianism states that an act can be justified if it promotes happiness, pleasure or maximises utility. Most importantly, however, the truth of the matter is that the assassination provided happiness and pleasure to only a small minority of the Egyptian population, namely the fundamentalists. Therefore, Sadat's assassination brought happiness to only a small section of the population. It was not a universal feeling. In all versions of utilitarianism, whether it is classical, ideal, act or rule utilitarianism, the main aim is to further happiness and utility. This was not achieved by Sadat's death. Theological utilitarianism, which states that the promotion of

happiness is the intention of God, does not, justify the assassination either since only the assassin in this case would have been of the opinion that he was fulfilling Gods' wishes. This was not a universal belief. Thus, in terms of both consequentialism and utilitarianism the assassination did not fulfil the aims, and the assassination cannot be justified.

Just War

As already established previously in the thesis, the Just War tradition has had a long history of development. It has had the opportunity to establish itself as a major debate in the academic sphere in terms of providing justification for acts of violence. Therefore, while trying to establish justifications for political assassinations the Just War tradition seems to fulfil this role. Although the Just War tradition inherently has a Christian heritage, in the contemporary world the Just War tradition has been incorporated in International Law and is therefore no longer a purely Christian tradition in any way. As a result, the justification for the use of force in any circumstance can be debated through the Just War tradition. For example Just War can be used to justify tyrannicide. Similarly justification for political assassinations can also be analysed through the Just War tradition. The six requirements of Just War will each be explained in relation to political assassinations, with the aim of finding out whether Just War can justify an act of political assassination. The six requirements of Just War will be discussed below with reference to political assassination.

The first requirement of Just War is Just Cause which maintains that the use of force is permitted if there is a real danger. By the same rules political assassinations can be committed if there is real danger and if such action would protect innocent people and would improve living conditions. The political assassination of Sadat did fulfil this criterion. The assassin Islambouli believed that there was a Just Cause as Sadat's death would make life better for the Egyptian population. Therefore, from an assassin's point of view there is always a just cause behind committing a political assassination. However, there are always other alternatives to rushing into perpetrating political assassinations. Most times other options are not even considered. Therefore the entire notion of just cause is very subjective. As mentioned earlier Sadat's assassin did believe that assassinating Sadat would rid Egypt of any real danger. In this case other alternatives such as actively voicing protests to the President, might have offered other ways of trying to improve conditions within Egypt. Policies that were implemented by Sadat were reactionary to contain the situation in the country. It seems that a Just Cause for the assassination of Anwar Sadat did not exist.

The second requirement states that a state can use force only if there is Right Intention. If this is the case then the assassination of Anwar Sadat cannot be justified, because who is to decide what is the right intention? The assassin will always think that he has the right intention for carrying out the assassination and this may not be the case for other people. As a result, right intention is not a requirement in the case of assassination.

According to popular authority and public declaration the authority for the use of force needs to come from the appropriate authority. This does raise

the question about what is appropriate authority. With reference to political assassinations, this very rarely to going to be the case. There is never going to be an appropriate authority as in most cases political assassinations are carried out by terrorist groups. Furthermore, this requirement states that there should be a proper process that is made public to both within the group and to its enemy. There is no way that it could ever be considered that a political assassination can be carried out through the right channels. Additionally, it is not possible ever to publicise plans of an assassination especially to the enemy, as this would make it difficult to plan an assassination as the target might take extra precautions. Therefore, the decision was not made by the proper authority and the decision to assassinate Sadat could not have been made public.

Furthermore, Just War maintains that a state should only use force if it is the last resort. This is one instance within the Just War tradition where there is some support for political assassinations. Sadat's assassin was of the opinion that there was no other way to prevent Egypt moving away from the path of Islam and the only option that was left would be to assassinate Sadat. Thus, according to the assassin this was the last resort.

Probability of Success is the next requirement. According to this if there is going to be any impact from the taken action then the act cannot be justified. Most assassinations are carried out in the hope that there will be considerable impact on the situation following the assassination. However, there is no guarantee that this will be the case. Sadat's assassination did not result in any significant change.

And the final requirement is proportionality, which states that the cost of the use of force must be in proportion to the good expected from taking up arms. The damage inflicted and the cost incurred from committing such an act as a political assassination is never going to produce good. A political assassination can create an unstable condition and this could mean that the action was counterproductive. Sadat's assassination did not change things within Egypt.

Terroristic Justifications

Since most political assassinations are committed by terrorist groups, this form of justification is very important especially with reference to the political assassinations of Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Yitzhak Rabin of Israel. It is important to remember that despite the importance of this form of justification there is very little in the literature which directly provides the link with justification. As mentioned before, the main sources of terroristic justification are religious ideologues, texts and scriptures. The most important sources for justification are religious ideologues, who in turn use religious texts to justify their preaching. Religious ideologues not only justify actions but they are also responsible for choosing the course of action that needs to be taken. This form of justification is used to legitimise any actions taken by religious extremists. In particular assassins use such methods to justify political assassinations as in most cases the assassins are related to religious terrorist groups. This is, however, not the case with all assassins.

Since most political assassinations are committed by terrorist groups this form of justification is very important specially with reference to the political assassinations of Anwar Sadat of Egypt. More specifically in the Egyptian context the link between religion and violent acts is strong. In most cases of violent attacks the action is justified by religion. Therefore, the role of ideology is very significant. This can be seen from a statement from the leaders of the Islamic movement in Morocco: Abd al-Salam Yasin states that "people don't come to Islam as an alternative to their social ills. People come to Islam in response to a call which goes deep into the human spirit".⁴⁸⁴ It is a vacuum within people that religion seems to fill and it becomes a basis for an ideology. Therefore, this ideology for groups is derived from religion. The evidence can be seen from the fact that to begin with, Anwar Sadat "was officially presented as the 'believer' president, and in photographs, interviews, speeches, and public appearances displayed a conspicuous attachment to religion".⁴⁸⁵ This emphasised the importance of the President of Egypt as a religious person. Therefore, his policies towards fundamentalists, such as arresting 1500 of them and his policy towards Israel were also seen as dishonouring religious beliefs, and therefore in turn dishonouring the countries' religious beliefs.⁴⁸⁶ The Muslim Brotherhood was one of the main movements at the time and Islambouli, Sadat's assassin, was associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Hasan Al Banna, the founding father of the Muslim Brotherhood, set the tone

⁴⁸⁴ Valerie J. Hoffman, Muslim Fundamentalists: Psychosocial Profiles. In Fundamentalism Comprehended. Edited by Martin E Marty and R. Scott Appleby. p209.

⁴⁸⁵ Patrick D. Gaffney, The Local Preacher and Islamic Resurgence in Upper Egypt, An Anthropological Perspective. In Religious Resurgence, Contemporary Cases in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Edited by Richard T. Antoun and Mary Elaine Hegland (Syracuse University Press, 1987). p37.

⁴⁸⁶ It is important to remember that the radicalisation Islamic fundamentalist ideology of Egypt had begun during Nasser's era. It was during this era did Sayyid Qutb questioned the ideology prevalent at the time.

by using religion to justify violence. He stated that Islam is a homeland and nationality for all Muslims. This sort of statement really laid the foundations for Islam being regarded as a very important aspect of being Muslim. It was the intensity of religious belief that enabled ideologues to use religion to justify violence. It has therefore been the perfect tool. The main influential figures of the Muslim Brotherhood were Sayyid Qutb and Muhamud Al- Faraj. There were many previous occasions when there were proposals to assassinate Sadat, but there were rejected by religious ideologues as Sadat would have escaped. This proves that "the leadership apparatus would decide on specific targets of terroristic action only after seeking clearance from the majlis as legal justification and sanction".⁴⁸⁷ Hence the importance of the terroristic justification for assassins is crucial. Sadat's assassin Islambouli was influenced by the main figures in the Brotherhood.

Thus, most assassins want their actions to be legitimised. This mostly reflects on their personal insecurities. They want to know that others will support their action, and therefore the groups that assassins belong to become very integral to their commitment.

Do political assassinations only succeed as an existential acts?

Before answering this question one really need to understand and explain what is meant by the term succeed. In other words when is a political assassination successful? In practical terms the success of a political assassination can be judged in terms of whether a political assassination did

⁴⁸⁷ Dekmejian, *op.cit.* p89-90.

achieve the desired aim. This mainly refers to specific societal changes that were realised as a result of an assassination. Furthermore, one needs to question what is meant by existential? The meaning of existential is literally existence. People are free agents and are free to make choices. It is these choices that determine the nature of the people. This highlights the importance of making choices. As a result it is these choices made by people that determine their existence. For example a man who joins the army feels that being part of the army and fighting and dying for the army is his duty and it determines his existence. Therefore, for a soldier fighting is an existential act. The sole purpose of his being has been to fight and it represents him. This is what Christopher Coker refers to when he discusses the existential warrior in his book 'Waging War Without Warriors'. Coker refers to the Japanese Samurai with regard to the existential warrior. He sums it up very well when he states "violence is not only instrumental; it is also the moral essence of the warrior. For true warriors, war making is not so much what they do but what they are".⁴⁸⁸ Therefore, this explains the true existential nature of an assassin. For an assassin, the ultimate aim is to kill and sacrifice his own life if the need arose. Coker writes "for the samurai, death had meaning. So too did honour, courage and loyalty, all of which gave life meaning too".⁴⁸⁹ Thus, comparisons can also be drawn with respect to the contemporary assassin. Just as for the samurai the concept of death for an assassin is an essential component of the job. In fact, an assassin will choose to be an assassin with the clear understanding that in most cases carrying out his job successfully can lead to the possibility of his death. At the same time along side this

⁴⁸⁸ Christopher Coker, "Waging War Without Warriors? The Changing Culture of Military Conflict". (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002) p6.

⁴⁸⁹ Coker, op.cit. p7.

existential side, there lies the expressive side of the actions committed by an assassin. Coker discusses the importance of symbolism with regards to acts of violence which also forms an important aspect of an assassin's work. He maintains that "symbolism involves the meaning the use of violence has both for the victim (anxiety and humiliation, both of which were involved on September 11) and for the offender (status, prestige, and reputation in his own group, in this case the Islamic world).⁴⁹⁰ This is certainly the case for all the three assassins in the three political assassinations examined in this thesis. The importance of symbolism to the offender and victim is not only restricted to the Islamic world.

Related to the question of the existential act is the issue of moral right or wrong. Michael Walzer in his article 'Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands' points out when asked the question

do you think you can govern innocently? My own answer is no, I don't think I could govern innocently – nor do most of us believe that those who govern us are innocent – as I shall argue below – even the best of them. But this does not mean that it isn't possible to do the right thing while governing. It means that a particular act of government (in a political party or in the state) may be exactly the right thing to do in utilitarian terms and yet

⁴⁹⁰ Coker, *op.cit.* p5.

leave the man who does it guilty of a moral wrong. The innocent man, afterwards, is no longer innocent⁴⁹¹

Although in his article Walzer discusses the issue of dirty hands from the point of view of leaders, similar parallels can be seen with assassins. A political leader has certain policies or aspects he has to pursue. Therefore the decisions taken by a political leader are not judged on the basis of what is morally right or wrong but rather it is the job of the political leader to carry out his duties, which may entail unpopular responses. This illustrates the existential nature of a political leader. The article really demonstrates that regardless of the moral issues sometimes it is necessary to pursue certain policies.

Finally, it is also important to understand the meaning of success. This success can be explained on three levels. The first is success in terms of the immediate consequence of the assassination. This implies whether the assassin killed the target or not. Secondly success can be implied in a general sense. In other words whether the assassination can be understood as an existential act. Finally, there is what success means to the assassin. There are three levels at which success can be understood in this sense.

As mentioned earlier, for an assassin, similarly to a samurai the true reason of his/her existence is to kill and die in the process. If we examine the three cases in the thesis to find out whether political assassinations succeed as existential acts, then the answer would be yes. Firstly, to take the political assassination of Anwar Sadat, the assassin Islambouli was very committed to

⁴⁹¹ Michael Walzer, Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands in War and Moral Responsibility, A Philosophy & Public Affairs Reader. p63.

the cause. He had been planning the assassination for quite some time. This became the mainstay of his existence. He was fully aware of the fact that by committing a political assassination in a military parade he was putting his life in danger by making himself an easy target. All this planning and organisation showed his commitment to the cause. Islambouli really wanted Sadat dead. Mohammed Heikal states that when Islambouli "came face to face with Sadat he forgot everything else in his hatred for the man he regarded as the arch-tyrant".⁴⁹² In terms of immediate success of the act the assassin was successful. Islambouli did successfully assassinate Sadat. The assassin was also successful in the existential sense as the main aim of the assassin was to assassinate Sadat. Thus, Islambouli was successful in carrying out an existential act. The death of Sadat was what the assassin lived and aimed for and in the end, this goal was fulfilled. Finally, Islambouli would have considered his actions to be a success as he assassinated his target. The assassination was committed in the hope that Sadat's death would change the path that Egypt was following to a more Islamic way of life. The immediate consequences of Sadat's death did not achieve this, but in the assassin's mind, he did successfully assassinate his target.

Thus, Islambouli the assassin was very sure in his mind about what he was going to do. The assassin was also aware that it was inevitable that the action would either mean death while carrying out the act, or he would be arrested. This however did not distract him from his mission. So far as the target of the assassination was concerned, Islambouli was clear about who he

⁴⁹² Heikal, *op.cit.* p255.

wanted to assassinate and therefore planned and trained with this specific purpose in mind.

Conclusion

A close examination of the assassination of Anwar Sadat reveals that Egypt faced a number of political changes which resulted in fundamentalist resurgence in the early years. At the same time there was a huge revival of political Islam which was used to influence the political order. Sadat was seen as the person responsible for all the problems faced by Egypt at the time, and this prompted his assassination. However, analysing the assassination from a theoretical perspective illustrated that it is be hard to justify the assassination of Sadat.

Chapter 4

ISRAEL

It was God. Amir replied.⁴⁹³

Introduction

Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel, was shot on November 5, 1995 and was officially pronounced dead at 11:10 p.m. later that evening. The perpetrator was a twenty - five year old man called Yigal Amir, a Jewish religious fundamentalist. Rabin was born on March 1, 1922. He was seen as a "soldier, political leader, peace maker and the last representative of a founding generation that literally created the state of Israel with its bare hands".⁴⁹⁴ "Rabin was a classic product of the Zionist revolution that began in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and expressed its aims in Palestine during the fifty years that followed".⁴⁹⁵ The basic idea behind the revolution was to save the Jews from anti - Semitism. It aimed to transfer Jews from Europe to a country of their own. Rabin's role from the War of Independence up to his assassination resulted in remarkable success, yet he managed to make political mistakes and enemies which cost him dearly. However, it seems that as he was about to achieve the dream of every Palestinian and many Israelis, his mistakes weighed more heavily than his achievements in the eyes of the right - wing parties and fundamentalist groups. Rabin's effort to secure peace was regarded by some as his worst

⁴⁹³ Rabin's assailant: I did stop the peace Process, 7/11/1995, St. Louis Post Dispatch.

⁴⁹⁴ International Herald Tribune (Paris), 8 November 1995. Rabin's Example, Eyes on Mount Herzl.

⁴⁹⁵ See Micheal Karpin and Ina Friedman, Murder In The Name Of God, The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin. (London: Granta Publications, 1998) p38-39.

move. In 1967, Rabin was responsible for the Israeli victory in the Six-Day war over Jordan, Egypt and Syria and brought Palestinians under Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza.⁴⁹⁶ As a result, the Six-Day war was an important achievement for the Israelis as it marked the defeat of the three Arab states. It made the Israeli people believe the redemption process had already begun. However, since Rabin's most cherished dedication was to the Peace Process with the Palestinians which he had been advocating for some time, his brutal assassination left the question open as to whether the Peace Process would gather enough momentum to reach a positive conclusion. In many ways, Rabin's assassination was an attempt to paralyse the Peace Process.

This chapter also analyses the causes, conditions and consequences of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Firstly, the deep desire to hold on to the land of Israel is also analysed within the context of the Holocaust. Secondly, the events leading up to the assassination of Rabin, which include the change in government, the Peace Process, land concessions and an increase in violence by fundamentalist groups is examined. Thirdly, this chapter briefly outlines the assassination event, and the final part of the chapter deals with the aftermath of the assassination and its political consequences.

⁴⁹⁶ Statesman, 6 November 1995. Rabin: A man of Peace.

The Israeli Context

Creation of Israel

The long and complex history of the Fertile Crescent lies at the core of any understanding of the development of contemporary forms of Jewish fundamentalism. In addition, Jewish fundamentalism is not a new concept or ideology but it can be traced back to the first century AD.⁴⁹⁷ However, it is Israel's recent troubled history that figures at the core of our understanding of Jewish fundamentalism, and is thus revealing with regards to Rabin's assassination by a Jewish fundamentalist. Correspondingly, an overview of contemporary far – right - wing groups in Israel is required, in order to establish their degree of influence on the assassination.

In essence, the most critical catalyst for the development of modern Jewish fundamentalism remains the symbolic significance of the Holocaust and the ensuing conditions underpinning the creation of the state of Israel. The Holocaust justified in many ways the creation of a politically and militarily strong safe haven for the survivors. In fact, the Holocaust has had a great effect upon the ways in which Israel has built its national identity and conducted its politics, particularly with its neighbours and its Palestinian population. In addition, the ancient land of Israel on which the new state was established had strong religious significance as the homeland, or the promised land, of the scattered Jewish population. Indeed, “that the State of

⁴⁹⁷As described by David C Rapoport the Jewish fundamentalists of the first century AD were called Zealots or Sicarii. The Zealots were active for around twenty - five years and were inspired by the hope of messianic deliverance, which is similar to contemporary Jewish fundamentalist groups.

Israel was established soon after the Holocaust gave it special meaning".⁴⁹⁸ Even while attempting to put an end to the British protectorate and establishing their own state, the Zionist movement had to use the means of terrorism to accomplish its aims. The legacy of the conditions of the creation of the state of Israel was thus two - tiered. On the one hand, with the inherent connection between religion and politics forming the founding principles of the Israeli state, Israeli politics acquired an explicit religious dimension making religious groups legitimate political actors. On the other hand, violent means became institutionalised as legitimate means to political success in the eyes of fundamentalists.

Fundamentalism and Israeli Society

Religion has always played an important role in Israeli society. Judaism is the religion and nationality whereas Zionism is the political programme. Jewish extremists have completely misconstrued these ideals. As mentioned before, Jewish fundamentalist ideology has an explicit messianic component. This is evident from the common belief among the fundamentalists that the destruction of the Mosque on the Temple Mount and the building of the temple will pave the way for the Messiah to come. Furthermore, another important element is that fundamentalists rely on religious texts, the Torah along with the Rabbi's interpretation of the Torah, and the Halakha, the Jewish law, to justify themselves. In other words, the Torah provides sacred legitimacy to the ideology and violent means advocated by fundamentalists.

⁴⁹⁸Ziva Flamhaft, Israel On The Road To Peace, Accepting the Unacceptable. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) p136.

For example, the words of Kook (son) were given the status of “da'at Torah, literally Torah Wisdom”.⁴⁹⁹ Kook (son) further stated that the annexation of the Occupied Territories was the truth, justice and religious fulfilment contained in the Holy Book. Furthermore, splinter organisations like the Lehi acknowledged their source of inspiration was the Torah.

Not only has the establishment of the state of Israel always been justified in religious terms, but the political developments in Israel since its creation have also been framed in religious terms, in turn, influencing the growth and militantism of Jewish fundamentalists - and, most notably, of Gush Emunin and the Kach Party. Most importantly, the territories occupied after the 1967 Six Day War have been regarded as biblical land which was intended to be a part of Israel: “...victory in the Six Day War was interpreted as a manifestation of God's intervention”.⁵⁰⁰ Thus, it restored Eretz or Ancient Israel to them. It strengthened the connection between political and religious gains, thereby further increasing the importance of religion: “the astonishing Israeli victory in the Six Day War provoked a religious awakening among orthodox and secular Jews”.⁵⁰¹ This clearly illustrates the significance of both politics, the conquering of the Occupied Territories, and religion, involving a messianic component. But after defeat in the 1973 war, Israel suffered a huge setback. Israel's notion of being an invincible state was shattered and “in the 1970s the entire Jewish world was affected by a teshwah (or tshuvah, a term which signifies return to Judaism and repentance

⁴⁹⁹ Gideon Aran, “The Father, The Son, and the Holy Land”, edited by R Scott Appleby, Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East, Spokesmen For The Despised. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977) p315.

⁵⁰⁰ Yehoshafat Harakabi, Israel's Fateful Decisions. (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 1988) p146.

⁵⁰¹ Flamhaft, op.cit. p135.

that is to say the return to full observance of Jewish law, the Halaka)".⁵⁰² The general notion was that Jews had altered their traditional religious path and the idea of establishing secular society was not in accordance with Jewish religion. In short, they interpreted the 1973 defeat as God's way of punishing the Israelis for straying from the righteous path.

Gush Emunim is one of the most important groups of Jewish fundamentalism established in 1974, just after the Jewish defeat in the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973. In many ways, Israeli fundamentalism was embodied in the hard core of Gush Emunim.⁵⁰³ Gush is said to have "wielded tremendous influence over the Likud administrations of Menachem Begin and Yitzak Shamir".⁵⁰⁴ In essence, "Gush and its contemporary followers pursue their political activism with a holistic view of a better future in opposition to the predicament of the present".⁵⁰⁵ Gush tried to maintain an Orthodox dimension yet at the same time did not deny any of the advantages of the modern world. Gush's main aim was to prevent the partition of Eretz Israel by establishing wild settlements in the Occupied Territories and by trying to pursue a policy of re-judaization from above. Thus, "the Gush was replacing the legal concept of the state of Israel by the biblical concept of the land of Israel which legitimised the occupation of the territories by virtue of the specific pact that God made with the chosen people".⁵⁰⁶ In short, it is

⁵⁰² Gilles Kepel, The Revenge of God, The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in The Modern world. op.cit p142.

⁵⁰³ Aran, op.cit. p274.

⁵⁰⁴ Lawrence Joffe, Keesing's Guide to the Middle East Peace Process. 1st Edition. (London: Catermill International Ltd, 1996) pg 153.

⁵⁰⁵ Samuel Peleg, "They shoot Prime Ministers too, Don't they? in Religious Violence in Israel: Premises, Dynamics, and Prospects", in Studies in Conflict and Terrorism Vol.20, No.3 September 1997. p228.

⁵⁰⁶ Kepel, op.cit. p141-142.

regarded as a revitalised messianic movement to fulfil unaccomplished political and social aims, including the acquisition of political power⁵⁰⁷.

With regard to Gush Emunim, the ideals and vision of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak ha Kohen Kuk (Kook) are important, as he was considered the spiritual authority of Gush. He was against the entire concept of ultra-orthodoxy and appreciated certain aspects of secular nationalism. Kook stated:

the return of Jews to their homeland is the advent of redemption and although final redemption requires that all Jews repent as a return to the way of religion, the preparatory work done by secular Zionists was potentially sacred nonetheless⁵⁰⁸

Kook tried to marry secular nationalism and religious sentiment. Yet, he believed that the coming of the Messiah would be imminent if Jews followed a religious path. His form of religious nationalism was based on the belief that God was leading Jews, the secular no less than the religious, to return to Israel.⁵⁰⁹ Thus, he viewed the capture of the Occupied Territories as a religious victory. His intention was to connect the political and social foundations of the state of Israel to religion. To him, establishing a modern state which would be governed truly by the Halaka or religious law, would lead to Redemption, and it laid the foundations for the coming of the

⁵⁰⁷Flamhaft, *op.cit.* p141.

⁵⁰⁸ Samuel Peleg, They Shoot Prime Ministers Too, Don't they? Religious Violence in Israel: Premises, dynamics and Prospects. In *Conflict and Terrorism* Vol.20, No.3 September 1997. p237.

⁵⁰⁹ Appleby, 'Spokesmen for the despised'*op.cit.* pg274.

Messiah. His son Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook used some of the same ideologies as his father, but radicalised them further. In other words, he had a more radical approach. He, along with his father, was to design what would come to be known as 'Kookist ideology'. The principles of this ideology were anchored in him when witnessing the birth of Israel and then the victory in the Six Day War which convinced him of the inevitability of redemption. It also led him towards a path of activism involving the use of violent methods, including terrorism. He blamed the fear of his disciples as the reason for the crises in Israel which in turn slowed the process of redemption. Kook (the son) claimed that everything was Jewish and that Judaism was everything, making secular government illegitimate. He focused only on Jewish nationalism and its attainment through religion.

Most of the militant, violent, acts of Gush Emunim were committed after the Yom Kippur War.⁵¹⁰ This was the period when decisions had to be made about the return of the territories in Sinai, the Golan Heights and the West Bank to the Egyptians, Syrians and Palestinians. In this respect, Rabin was seen as failing to protect his people and instead was sacrificing the land of the Israelis. Underpinning these goals is the belief in the ultimate arrival of the Messiah. There has even been a conspiracy to blow up the Muslim Dome on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, designed to accelerate this event.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰Ehud Sprinzak, "Three Models of Religious Violence: The Case of Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel", edited by Martin E Marty and R Scott Appleby in Fundamentalism and the State. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) p471.

⁵¹¹For further reference see, Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism. op.cit. p103.

Catalysts

The immediate catalysts which culminated in Rabin's assassination consist of political choices, land concessions, the Baruch Goldstein massacre and an increase in violence, and these are analysed in order to understand the political environment existing during that period.

Political Choices

The politics of the state of Israel have been the main cause for the growing resentment among right-wing sections of the Israeli population. It is these grievances which have furthered the use of violence in order to exert influence over politics and prevent any unwanted changes. In other words, the case of Israel exemplifies how "political violence exists wherever there are politics, power struggles, and incompatible interests".⁵¹² The elections of 1992 restored to power the Labour party under Rabin and a coalition government was formed with the Meretz and Shas parties.⁵¹³ This consequently ended the fifteen - year - old rule of the Likud party first under Menachem Begin and then under Yitzhak Shamir.⁵¹⁴ The reign of Likud was

⁵¹²Peleg, *op.cit.* p227

⁵¹³Religious right wing parties in the Knesset. In due course, the United States as a constant partner in the Peace Process made attempts to continue the talks in Washington D.C. It involved ten rounds of bilateral talks between Israeli and Palestinian-Jordanian delegates from November 3, 1991 to July 1, 1993. Several proposals were made during the course of these peace talks by both Israelis and Palestinians but were rejected. However, the most important event was the decrease in support of the right wing parties to the Likud which in turn slowly took away their authority in the Knesset forcing Shamir to call for early election.

⁵¹⁴Except the period between 1984 to 1986 when the Labour party under Shimon Peres led the national unity government.

to be very important in sowing the seed leading to the growth and influence of the religious parties in political affairs. However, one important achievement of the Likud party was the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979, thereby removing the threat of attack from Israel's biggest Arab neighbour.

Most importantly, it is apparent that Rabin gave top priority to the Peace Process. He was trying to steer Israel towards peace. He was fully aware of the problems in retaining the Occupied Territories and thus recognised the need for Israel to "negotiate with any group that will recognise Israel's right to exist in agreed and secure boundaries as specified in UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and that will abjure the use of terror and violence in resolving problems with Israel".⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, in assimilating its Palestinian population, Israel would thereby dilute its Jewish national identity. This view was in sharp contrast to that of his predecessor Shamir who did not envisage a Peace Process. In turn, these peace initiatives struck a chord with a small majority of the Israeli population, with the exception of the religious right, which objected to negotiation based on land concessions. As pointed out by Theodore H. Friedgut, "for majority of the population, neither of these alternatives was acceptable".⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, "...enormous encouragement that Gush received from religious parties and the parties of the extreme right (such as the NRP⁵¹⁷, Morsha, Tehiya Tzomet, Kach Moledat and even a Jewish underground), in effect created an ultra

⁵¹⁵ Theodore H Friedgut, "Israel's Turn Toward Peace", edited by Robert O Freedman, *Israel Under Rabin*. (Westview Press, 1995) p71.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.* p73.

⁵¹⁷ National Religious Party.

nationalist alliance in the Israeli polity capable of undermining any peace initiative".⁵¹⁸

Peace Process and Land Concessions

Furthermore, in the context of peace negotiations, Rabin came to the conclusion "that settlements were becoming increasingly unpopular with Israel's growing middle class, who were more concerned with the improvements in quality of life...".⁵¹⁹ Nevertheless, this process fuelled anger and all Jewish fundamentalist groups began to label Rabin as a traitor. Fundamentalists began to point out that Rabin's election campaign did not mention giving up land for peace. Instead, once he assumed power he propagated self - rule for the Palestinians which would in turn reduce the terrorist violence. "...Rabin stressed that his immediate concern was to separate the two distinct religious, ethnic, and political entities as much as possible".⁵²⁰

Briefly, the efforts of the Peace Process can be traced to when George Bush former president of the United States, took it upon himself to achieve peace for the Middle East, identifying Israel's hold over the Occupied Territories as the core obstacle to conflict resolution. Eight trips were made to the Middle East by Secretary of State, James Baker, during the summer and autumn of 1991 to win support for the Peace process. "Baker's goal was to make progress on the mutual recognition of a shared problem,

⁵¹⁸ Flamhaft ,*op.cit.* p144-145.

⁵¹⁹ David Makovsky, Making Peace With The PLO, The Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accord. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) p84.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. p86.

development of a commitment to negotiate, and establishment of procedural parameters for subsequent discussions".⁵²¹ Baker's proposal was rejected by the Syrians, Israelis and even the Palestinians on their respective grounds. However, with time, countries began to realise the need for a proposal and this finally led to the peace talks to be held in Madrid on October 30, 1991, by Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Israel and representatives of the European Community and the Gulf Cooperation Council. This was important for the Palestinians who for the first time represented themselves in peace talks.⁵²² The United States continued to make efforts to hold talks in Washington D.C. There were ten sessions of bilateral talks between Israeli and Palestinian-Jordanian delegates.

However, during the peace talks several proposals were presented by both sides, for example, in the third round of talks, January 13-14, 1992, Palestinians were offered limited authority by Israel over agriculture, education, trade and taxation, and Israel would retain control over security, Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories and foreign affairs. Palestinians suggested self - rule for the residents of Jerusalem, a freeze on all Jewish settlements or internationally supervised elections for a parliament assuming authority over the people. The proposal by the Israelis was rather conservative, keeping Israeli hold over the most important sections of the economy, which was unacceptable to the Palestinians. The Palestinian proposal illustrated the desire to gain control over important sections of the

⁵²¹ Deborah J Gerner, One Land, Two Peoples, The Conflict Over Palestine.(Boulder : WestView Press, 1990)

⁵²² This was followed by bilateral talks between Israel and Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. However, the conference came to an abrupt halt when a quarrel started in which the Israeli delegation wanted to move the talks to the Middle East and the Arabs wanted it to remain in Madrid but in the end both teams left Spain without any decision for future talks.

economy, which was not agreed by the Israeli side. However, it made the Israelis realise that the process of securing peace would involve land concessions. The final agreement involved the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, and negotiations would follow with regards to security, borders, refugees and so on. Thus, these land concessions were to become one of the major factors instigating Rabin's death, as by such agreements he was giving away land acquired after the victory in the 1967 war.

It was shortly before the sixth round of talks that Rabin was elected to power. Amidst the bilateral talks "an opportunity for a unique kind of quasi-citizen diplomacy presented itself through a Norwegian channel".⁵²³ A suggestion was made to hold secret talks between Israel and the Palestinians. If social and political conditions for Palestinians were improved, long-lasting peace had a chance of being built in the region. It should be noted that Rabin would have never initiated such talks. "He lacked a grand design or comprehensive plan for a breakthrough with the PLO, Rabin's willingness to explore the Oslo option -however tentative - was crucial".⁵²⁴ He clearly was in favour of bilateral talks as they enabled him "to play one Arab negotiating partner off against the other, and met his domestic political needs as well".⁵²⁵ Thus, on September 13, 1993, the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements was signed by Mahmoud Abbas, the PLO official and Shimon Peres, Israeli foreign minister.

⁵²³ Helena Cobban, "Israel and the Palestinian: From Madrid to Oslo and Beyond", edited by Robert Freedman In Israel Under Rabin. p101.

⁵²⁴ Makovsky, op.cit. pg 118.

⁵²⁵ Ibid. p120.

Increase in Violence

Rabin was responsible for the increased violence in the Occupied Territories as a result of his Iron Fist policies of hard punishment, the deportation from Israel to Southern Lebanon of 400 Palestinians suspected of having connections with the Islamic terrorist organisations like the *HAMAS* or *Islamic Jihad*. Also, Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza because of increased Intifada violence on the local Israeli population. The United States presented a Israeli-Palestinian Joint Declaration of Principles which was rejected by the Palestinians.⁵²⁶ The tenth round meeting marked the end of the peace talks as both sides reached no significant agreement. Instead there was further violence as Palestinians resorted to extreme violence, as in 1992 when security personnel were fired at, two Jews were stabbed and finally a GSS handler was murdered. The reason for such acts by the Palestinians was primarily the need to reach a peace agreement that would ensure security and safety to Palestinian populations in the Occupied Territories. The Oslo Accords also accelerated the radicalism of religious fundamentalism. In Rabin's opinion the best way to attain peace lay in stating that the Gaza strip had no religious significance for the Israelis. Although this view was supported by many secular Israelis there was strong rejection by the religious parties, which fuelled the Jewish fundamentalists. Fundamentalists began to stress that Rabin's election campaign did not mention giving up land for peace. The fundamentalists and the settlers felt betrayed by a government willing to give away land.

⁵²⁶The Declaration was similar to the Israeli proposal offered earlier. For further reference see, Deborah J Greener, *One land Two Peoples, The Conflict Over Palestine*. op.cit. p182-186.

However, in retaliation for such atrocities on the Jewish population, and also to prevent the Peace Process, the Baruch Goldstein massacre occurred. By far the most important event in terms of violence triggering the assassination of Rabin was the Goldstein massacre. On February 24, 1994 Baruch Goldstein, a Brooklyn immigrant and a follower of Meir Kahane, entered a mosque in Hebron and killed forty Muslim worshippers. His attack occurred in the middle of the Muslim holy month, Ramadan. It also coincided with the Jewish festival of Purim. His attack resulted in his being considered a martyr, as it was a significant event illustrating defiance to the Peace Process. As pointed out by Moshe Brawer, "the massacre in the mosque at Hebron on 25 February 1994, was intended to derail the peace process and very nearly did".⁵²⁷ It provided fundamentalists like Amir with further incentives to engage in violent action to stop the Peace Process. This Amir interpreted as implying the assassination of the chief promoter of the Peace Process, which would end the peace efforts if it resulted in his death. Amir was quoted as saying "I did this to stop the Peace Process".⁵²⁸

To sum up, it can be said that Israelis are divided in their political visions for Israel. Some Israelis recognise the establishment of a secular state, while others recognise the establishment of a secular state underpinned by religious principles, and finally, some Israelis recognise the establishment of only a religious state. Jewish fundamentalists are located at the right pole of the political spectrum and only recognise a religious form of state as legitimate.

⁵²⁷Max Beloff, "The Diaspora and the Peace Process", edited by Karsh Efraim, Peace in the Middle East. (England: Frank Cass & CO. Ltd, 1994). p37.

⁵²⁸Rabin's assailant: I did this to stop the Peace Process, St Louis Post Dispatch, 7/11/1995.

The Assassination

Yitzhak Rabin was shot dead on November 5, 1995 by Yigal Amir. Rabin was attending a peace rally in Tel Aviv where he had just sung the Song of Peace and then tucked the lyrics into his breast pocket. Rabin said at the peace rally, "there are enemies of the peace process, and they try to hurt us, but violence undermines democracy and must be denounced and isolated".⁵²⁹ As he walked off the podium and down the stairway leading to a sheltered area, where his car awaited him, Amir approached and shot three bullets. The Song of Peace was drenched in blood. Rabin apparently caught his stomach and was rushed into the car and taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead after a few hours.

Religious justification

As mentioned before, the fundamentalists' ideas developed by the Kach Party and Gush Emunim were influential in right-wing and orthodox circles, influencing young people such as Yigal Amir. Amir was associated with a fundamentalist group called Eyal which was a splinter organisation of the Kach Party. It is a right - wing group which emerged in 1995, centred in Hebron and Kiryat, and is headed by a history student called Avishai Raviv.

⁵²⁹Wulf Steve, "Thou Shalt Not Kill, The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin hits at the soul of Israel and its torturous quest for peace", in Time Magazine, November 13, 1995 Volume 146, No. 20. Internet-
<http://www.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/archive/1995/951113/cover.html>

Amir's justification for the killing had several intertwined facets including personal, political and religious motivations. Amir did not question that, "Rabin government's formal legitimacy; it was political and moral wisdom in pursuing a course that Israel ferociously against itself on a matter of utmost historical gravity".⁵³⁰ As mentioned before, he was a law student in a prestigious Orthodox university in Israel. Additionally, he attended religious yeshivas where religious studies and military service were combined. He felt he lived in a hostile environment and came in constant contact with violent speeches of rabbis and was tuned to take an anti-Rabin view. This is obvious since he was associated with Eyal, a splinter organisation of the Kach party. Continuous attacks were made by portraying pictures of Rabin as a Arab Kaffiyeh, and posters depicted him and his supporters as 'mosrim' (traitors), 'rodhim' (attackers) and 'rozhim' (murderers). He considered Rabin to be an apostate. His image of Rabin as the hero of the 1967 war was destroyed as Rabin signed a peace agreement with the PLO giving away the part of the Jewish Holy Land. The militancy of the religious right was felt even in the messianic dimension. This came to be established firmly only after the capture of the biblical land which would restore Eretz Israel after the 1967 war. Therefore, the concession of land was unthinkable. This notion was very much embedded in the ideology of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook (son), who stated that there exists a deep holy connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, which depends on maintaining

⁵³⁰Hillel Halkin, "Israel & the Assassination: A Reckoning", in Commentary, January 1996. p26.

the integrity of both and cannot be separated.⁵³¹ As an atmosphere of violence was created before the assassination it became inevitable that all the hatred was to be directed against the leader.

In messianic terms, the assassin believed that Rabin was responsible for preventing the coming of the Messiah. He had been unfaithful to the age old history of Jewish messianism. After his arrest he stated that if nonviolent methods failed, killing Rabin was necessary to initiate the Messiah's arrival. This religious dimension was intertwined with more pragmatic political considerations. The system that the government was pursuing was not the right path for the establishment of a Jewish state. Amir felt that Rabin was giving too much away to the Gentiles (Arabs) who were responsible for humiliating the Jews. Thus, when there is a clash between God and leader, one's obedience should be towards God. Amir viewed the Peace Process as leading to another Holocaust. Thus, according to Amir, Rabin's collaboration with the enemy in the Peace Process was a total reversal of policy, and Amir's strong messianic belief, reliance on Jewish sacred texts and Rabbi teachings were enough to motivate him. Amir had sought rabbinical sanction for the assassination, which was not given, but he went ahead following his own instincts for Jewish law and messianic belief. His first instinct was to receive religious sanction but since removal of the leader was bound upon him, Amir went ahead with the assassination.

⁵³¹For further reference see, Appleby R Scott, Spokesmen of the Despised, Chapter Six, "The Father, The Son and The Holy Land".op.cit.

The Aftermath

In the Israeli case, the consequences of the assassination are quite evident. Even after the signing of the Accords, there was a marked increase in violence on both sides of the camp. Severe violence was witnessed in Gaza and a curfew was imposed in the region. However, the violence had been further accelerated by the social problems like unemployment, housing, sanitation and further decline in the standard of living that were becoming more prominent in Gaza. With the death of Rabin, Israelis felt the Peace Process would come to an end. This was evident from the fact that, with the victory of the Likud party and Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister, no significant progress can be expected as even before elections he declared that if he became the Prime Minister, "he would not feel obligated to honour the peace agreements... reached with Arafat...".⁵³² He made it clear that he was against concession of any land which constitutes the home of the Israeli people and is also a part of Eretz Israel.⁵³³ It is, therefore, inevitable that high expectations of concrete results from any future talks on peace in the region are doubtful because of the negative attitude of Benjamin Netanyahu. All this increased his popularity and his victory seemed imminent. Yigal Amir did achieve the desire of many Israelis to prevent the implementation of the Peace Process but at the same time a slim chance exists of conceding land for peace, which may be due to

⁵³² A Promise of Peace?: The Israeli-Palestinian Accord in the Context of World and Regional Events, 1984-1995. p330.

⁵³³ For further reference see, Ibid.

international pressures, or increased violence. At the same time, the religious components cannot be overlooked. Messianic elements, hatred of Gentiles and a strong belief in the biblical notion of the Land of Israel will continue to play significant roles and thereby dominate any future talks on the Peace Process.

The case study of the assassination of Rabin will help to understand the questions that were set in Chapter One. The three questions will thus be answered below in relation to the question.

Can the assassinations analysed in the thesis be categorised as a political assassinations?

Chapter One and the previous chapter it was established that the definition put forward by Kirkham, Levy, and Crotty is the best available definition that can be used. As a result, this illustrates that the assassination of Rabin contains elements from three different categories, namely elite substitution, terroristic assassination and an anomic assassination. Rabin's assassination can be categorised as an elite substitution. Rabin was the most important political figure in the country. There was an underpinning systemic change behind Rabin's assassination. The main aim was to remove Rabin, who was responsible for furthering the Peace Process, and this would put an end to the Peace Process. Rabin was giving away biblical land meant only for the Israeli population, and thus deserved to die according to the fundamentalists. Thus, the major systemic change was to stop the Peace Process. At the same time,

the assassination of Rabin was not a conscious part of any kind of power struggle. He was not removed in order to be replaced by someone from the opposing group. The political assassination of Rabin cannot be categorised as tyrannicide. This is simply because the assassination was not targeted at Rabin to replace him with a better, less oppressive, more rational leader. Although he may have been considered a tyrant by his assassin, Rabin was not a tyrant for pursuing policies that would reduce tension within the Palestinian-Israeli context. There was only one major reason to assassinate Rabin. Rabin's assassination can be considered as a terroristic in so far as the assassin was connected to a terrorist group and the assassination was very discriminate, as it specifically targeted Rabin. There was no intention of illustrating the government's inability to rule or to let a minority govern a majority. In a way, it was about ensuring that the minority opinion on the Peace Process prevailed. Therefore, the assassination cannot be categorised as a terroristic assassination according to the definition put forward by Kirkham, Crotty and Levy, but it is a terroristic assassination according to the amended definition. The assassination to a large degree can be categorised as an anomic assassination. Yigal Amir was a lone assassin who had private reasons for acting as he did. Yet, at the same time, the fundamentalist community shared the same grievances as Amir. As a result, his reasons were not private in the sense that they were personal reasons. As stated before, Amir's main reason was to put an end to the Peace Process by assassinating Rabin. He felt this was his duty and that God chose him to assassinate Rabin. He wanted to die a martyr. He justified his action by religion, and by what the Torah stated and what the Rabbis preached. However, Amir did not

appear to have any psychiatric disorder. He was completely aware of what he was doing. Therefore, anomic assassination seems to be the best suited category for Rabin's assassination. The assassination was not propaganda by deed. This is because there was no intention of directing attention to a specific problem. It was assumed that people were already aware of the problem of the Peace Process and the only thing to be done was to put an end to it. The assassination of Rabin would achieve just this. Here again, it is difficult to analyse what category best describes the Rabin assassination. The Yitzhak Rabin assassination was an elite substitution, a terroristic assassination and an anomic assassination. Furthermore, as mentioned before, the different categories are not mutually exclusive and hence further the difficulty of providing a perfect classification.⁵³⁴

Can the justifications that are analysed justify the political assassinations in this thesis?

When trying to answer this question it is important to keep in mind the basic premises of the consequentialist/utilitarianist debate, whereby if the consequences of an act promote happiness, or an act produces greater utility, then the act would be justified. Amir the assassin did believe that the assassination of Rabin would lead to greater happiness. However, this was not the case, and in this respect the consequentialist/utilitarianist debate failed to

⁵³⁴ For further reference on the contextual aspects of the assassination refer to Edward W. Said 'The End of the Peace Process, Oslo and After', Yoram Peri 'The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin', David Mokovsky, 'Making Peace With the PLO. The Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accord'. Also the case study in the thesis offers a context to the assassination.

meet the claims of the debate. This will become clear in the following discussion.

According to consequentialism an act is right or wrong depending on the consequences. That is, it is important that the political assassination of Rabin would depend on the consequences of the act, and whether it promotes the consequences further. It could be said that since the consequences of the assassination of Rabin seem to have promoted happiness and pleasure, primarily by putting an end to the Peace Process, the act seems to have been justified. In other words, the ending of the Peace Process promoted happiness. As a result, in broad terms consequentialism justifies the act of political assassination of Rabin. According to the fundamental precepts of all forms of utilitarianism, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin cannot constitute a justified act since utilitarianism preaches that an action is right when it promotes happiness or pleasure. By implication this means that the happiness or pleasure would be felt by the whole of society. The assassination did result in promoting happiness as it meant that the Peace Process had been stopped. However, it is important to remember the ending of the Peace Process resulted in happiness only for a small minority of people, similar to the situation following the assassination of Anwar Sadat. It was again only the fundamentalist section of the population that was happy as a result of the assassination and the subsequent ending of the Peace Process. In fact, even amongst the fundamentalist section there was a section that was unhappy with the assassination of Rabin. Thus, the assassination of Rabin cannot be justified according to utilitarianism.

The element of self-interest which is part of theological utilitarianism believes that promoting happiness is the aspiration of God. This specially applies to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. The assassination was a combination of self-interest and the desire to promote happiness. There was a significant religious aspect, as Amir believed that he was chosen by God to assassinate Rabin. He felt that it was his duty. Rabin's desire to give away biblical land was seen as disagreement with God's desire. Furthermore, sanctions from religious ideologues to assassinate Rabin gave the assassination a special religious angle. There also was significance in the date, place and time of the assassination. As a result, theological utilitarianism justifies the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

Furthermore, in the contemporary usage of utilitarianism, where the focus is now on utility or usefulness it cannot justify the assassination of Rabin. However, the assassination was extremely useful as it stopped the Peace Process. The assassination also prevented the giving away of biblical land. According to both versions of Act utilitarianism, the assassination of Rabin cannot be justified because the first version maintains that the consequence of the assassination was far greater than any other alternative. However, no other alternative to committing an assassination was even considered. Rabin had conducted the worst mistake of his life by trying to initiate a Peace Process. As a result, no other alternative was even considered. Secondly, the utility produced by the assassination was as much as any other method might have produced. Once again no other method was used, therefore it cannot be concluded that the utility arising from the assassination was much greater than any other option. Thus, both

versions do not justify the assassination of Rabin on the basis of utility. According to Rule utilitarianism, an assassination can produce greater utility than if the assassination does not take place. There is no way of knowing if Rabin's assassination did have this effect. It was only in the assassin's eyes that the assassination put an end to the Peace Process. Thus, in conclusion, none of the forms of utilitarianism justify the political assassination of Rabin.

Just War

This section will analyse the six requirements of Just War in order to decide whether the assassination of Rabin can be justified.

The first requirement of Just War is Just Cause, which maintains the importance of there being a real danger. As a result, with regard to Yitzhak Rabin, a just cause does not seem to exist. According to Amir, there was a just cause which happened to be the end of the Peace Process. However, it seems that Amir was not entirely but partially successful in his mission. Once again there were other possibilities rather than assassinating Rabin. The obvious reason for the assassination was that eventually the whole issue of the Peace Process would have to be addressed, and Rabin, being the Prime Minister, happened to be at the time at the fore - front of the entire peace process. Therefore, a just cause does not legitimise the assassination as this might not have solved the problem.

The second requirement states that a state can use force only if there is a right intention. There was no right intention behind the

assassination of Rabin. Amir may have thought that his desire for putting an end to the Peace Process would constitute right intention however, this was not the case and there was no guarantee that Rabin's death would end the Peace Process. As a result, there was no right intention behind his assassination.

The third requirement is popular authority and public declaration, which states that the authority for the use of force needs to come from the appropriate authority. According to this requirement the assassination of Rabin did not come from popular authority. Amir was loosely associated with a terrorist group, and by no means does a terrorist group constitute popular authority, as they are always a minority in any society. Furthermore, it is impossible to have a public declaration of an assassination, as it would be impossible to carry out an assassination if it were made public. Therefore, popular authority and public declaration do not justify Rabin's assassination.

Last resort is the next requirement. In the mind of the assassin, the assassination was the last resort in order to stop Rabin from furthering the Peace Process. However, it can safely be said that Amir would never have considered any other option, and that the assassination would have been the first choice of action. Thus, the assassination was the last resort for Amir. According to probability of success, which is the next requirement, there has to be an impact from the action taken. Rabin's assassination was carried out in the hope of putting an end to the Peace Process. However, an impact cannot be guaranteed.

Finally, according to proportionality, it is impossible to state that the assassination of Rabin produced good. Rabin's assassination has not really produced further good and in this way the assassination cannot be justified.

Terroristic Justification

This form of justification is very important when referring to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. As already mentioned, ideologues, texts and scriptures play a prominent role for terroristic justifications. Rabin's assassin Yigal Amir claimed to have carried out the assassination on his own, however, there is evidence to show that he was loosely associated with Gush Emunim, a terrorist group. Both Abraham Isaac Kook and Zvi Yehuda Kook (son) influenced the Gush Emunim. Their teachings were very aggressive in nature. On many occasions both believed that giving away Israeli land was out of question as the land was given to them by God and it was the Holy Land. Kook the elder believed that "his form of religious nationalism was based on the belief that God was leading Jews, the secular no less than the religious, to return to the Holy Land".⁵³⁵ Furthermore, "the Kookist vision was the conviction that Israel's chosen status among nations is betokened and even guaranteed by its inner character as an Orthodox Jewish nation".⁵³⁶ This statement clearly signifies the importance of religion in Israel, and how everything is related to religion. Kook the son was more extreme in his views than his father,

⁵³⁵ Gideon Arran, *op.cit.* p298.

⁵³⁶ Arran, *op.cit.* p299.

although he borrowed and interpreted most of his father's teachings. Kook the son relied more heavily on religion. This can be seen when he established the celebration of Independence Day as a key religious event. Furthermore, when there was talk of withdrawal from occupied territories, Kook "issued the authoritative call 'Be killed rather than transgress'.⁵³⁷ This attitude illustrates the relation between religion and violence and indirectly supports the use of religion to justify violence. Apparently there is "no conclusive evidence that Yigal Amir found formal Halakhic justification from any religious authority for carrying out the slaying, although a documentary film claims that he did".⁵³⁸ Moreover, "Amir may have concluded from things he heard and to which he was exposed that his deed would receive religious approval, or he may have actually thought that he had such justifications".⁵³⁹ Therefore, this really stresses the importance of legitimacy and that an assassin wants it before committing a political assassination. Although an assassin is convinced about what he going to do, the added religious significance helps to give additional support to the mission.

Do political assassinations only succeed as existential acts?

Rabin's assassination also did succeed as an existential act. In similar ways to the case of Sadat, the assassin Yigal Amir's main aim was to assassinate Rabin. Amir had tried on two previous occasions to assassinate

⁵³⁷ Arran, *op.cit.* p313.

⁵³⁸ Nachman Ben Yehuda, *One More Political Murder by Jews* edited in *The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin* by Yoram Peri. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) p82.

⁵³⁹ Yehuda, *One More..* p82.

Rabin. This illustrates that Amir was truly committed to the cause and was only waiting for the most appropriate time. The rally was the first time that Amir was able to get close enough to carry out his plan. Amir was also aware of the fact that carrying out an assassination in the public would mean that either he would be shot or captured. He therefore fully expected the repercussions of the assassination. Amir successfully killed Rabin, and in this way the assassination did succeed as an existential act. In terms of immediate success Amir was successful. In existential terms the assassin's main goal was to assassinate his target which was carried out successfully. In terms of success for the assassin, Amir's action was a success, as he got rid of his target. Furthermore, Amir's actions did affect the Peace Process and this would count as a successful assassination.

Conclusion

The discussion of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin sets out a clear picture surrounding the assassination. It reveals the importance of history and how it plays an integral part in Israel's contemporary existence. The chapter highlighted the political choices which played key factors leading to the assassination of Rabin. In addition the role of fundamentalism is important to the history of Israel. The ideology of most of the groups contains a strong messianic component, justification is sought in sacred texts and from religious leaders. There exists the belief in violence to attain goals, and the inherent aim is to affect change in the political structures of society.

Finally, analysing the various forms of justification shows that the assassination of Rabin cannot be justified.

Chapter 5

India

Innocent who made too many foes was doomed⁵⁴⁰

Introduction

A powerful bomb explosion at 10:20 p.m. on 21st May, 1991, killed Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India. The venue was an election rally in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu, a southern state of India. This forthcoming election was to mark the comeback of the popular, young and dynamic leader, but all hopes of an electoral gain died with just one explosion. The assassin was a woman named Subha, but the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) were the group directly responsible for the assassination.⁵⁴¹

In this chapter, the causes, circumstances, and consequences of the assassination, and the justification behind the assassination, will be outlined to illustrate the specific ways in which political factors have played an important role in leading to hostility and eventually culminating in the assassination. The first part of this chapter plots the emergence of the LTTE – linking the emergence of the LTTE to corresponding political developments in the country.

The growing tensions and hostilities that prevailed during this period are highlighted within the course of the chapter. Also, it is important to remember that not only did Rajiv Gandhi face danger from the LTTE, but also he faced threats

⁵⁴⁰ “Innocent who made too many foes was doomed” *Times*, London, 22/05/1991.

⁵⁴¹ The assassin Subha’s motives, ideology or justification are not as relevant because the mastermind of the attack was the LTTE. Subha did not even know who the target was until the day.

from different factions both inside and outside the country; these will be mentioned within the course of this chapter. Furthermore, to date the LTTE has denied any responsibility for the assassination. However, all the evidence that has been found shows strong signs of LTTE involvement. As a result, the chapter traces and analyses the history of the LTTE by tracing the development of the group and its relations to the various political developments in the country. Finally, this chapter attempts to use the Gandhi assassination to prove how political factors were the primary reasons behind committing the assassination. Furthermore, a step – by - step analysis of the entire assassination event is outlined, which is followed by discussion the consequences of the assassination.

Rajiv Gandhi was the eldest son of Indira Gandhi. In his youth, he showed no signs of any interest in politics. Barry James, in the *International Herald Tribune* described him thus: “Rajiv, a former airline pilot, who never before had shown any interest in politics, and always seemed aloof from the party turmoil of the world’s most popular democracy”.⁵⁴² His passion lay with flying and he became a commercial pilot for the domestic carrier, Indian Airlines. Rajiv’s enthusiasm for flying was similar to that of his brother Sanjay. At the age of 33, Sanjay died in an aerobatic stunt over New Delhi in 1980. “Sanjay was the chosen one, the one who was to carry on the nascent Gandhi dynasty”.⁵⁴³ But with his tragic death, all focus fell on Rajiv. He was much quieter, more amiable and had a youthful charm. He was seen by his mother and many others as the likely heir, and was given the post of general secretary of the Congress (I) Party. In 1981, he was elected in a by-election to the Lok Sabha. “He also travelled with Mrs Gandhi

⁵⁴² “Bomb Kills Rajiv Gandhi at an Election Rally, Closing a chapter on Indian Political Dynasty”, *International Herald Tribune*, 22/05/1991.

⁵⁴³ “Bomb kills Rajiv Gandhi at an Election Rally, Closing a chapter on Indian Political Dynasty” *International Herald Tribune*, 22/05/1991.

and presided at government functions, throwing his energies into a major effort to reorganise the party and bring in younger politicians, with the aim of ridding it of its reputation as tolerant of corruption, bribery and even lawlessness among workers".⁵⁴⁴ This marked the entry of Rajiv into the political forefront. He wanted to promote regional cooperation and deal with problems directly. An example of this can be seen in the Assam and Punjab accords. Furthermore, the way he handled the two issues revealed his intelligence and interest in solving issues. Rajiv Gandhi's commitment towards international economic order and world peace made him popular amongst the international community. "Mr Gandhi developed a low key style that was initially popular with the elites of the cities, especially the community".⁵⁴⁵ In short, as summed up by Shekhar Gupta of *India Today*, "For a deposed monarch, out to reclaim his kingdom, Rajiv Gandhi could not have asked for a better build up. Shorn of security, shorn of the aloofness he exhibited in the past, displaying so far unknown panache for mixing with the people, the Rajiv, on the 1991 campaign trail, has come a long way from the Rajiv of 1989, with that defensive in-the-ropes look.... People yearn to see him from close, shake his hand feel him, even push him around...".⁵⁴⁶ Thus, with the assassination of his mother, Indira Gandhi Rajiv, took over as Prime Minister until the congress party was defeated in 1989. In other words, "circumstances arising out of a personal tragedy necessitated the entry of Shri Rajiv Gandhi in the arena of national politics".⁵⁴⁷ As a result, it can be observed that political assassinations have always played a prominent part in politics in the sub-continent.

⁵⁴⁴ "A Thwarted Dream: Ethnic Harmony" *International Herald Tribune*, 22/05/1991.

⁵⁴⁵ "A Thwarted Dream: Ethnic Harmony" *International Herald Tribune*, 22/05/1991.

⁵⁴⁶ R.K. Murthi, *Historic Assassinations*, (New Delhi: Konark Publishing Pvt Ltd, 1991) p3.

⁵⁴⁷ *Jain Commission Report-Threats to Rajiv Gandhi*-Chapter 1 Sections 1&2, <http://www.India-today.com>

Immediate causes

There are numerous factors that contributed to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. However, "three cataclysmic events followed one another in rapid-fire sequence:

- The Bofors scandal, the single most divisive, bitter controversy since independence.
- The Nusli Wadia- Dhirubhai Ambani feud that would involve V.P Singh, Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Express, Michael Fairfax Agency and a bizarre murder plot.
- The Zail Singh-Rajiv Gandhi confrontation which led to an abortive coup engineered by Congress (I) dissidents and Opposition leaders - a coup that could have permanently change Indian's political landscape had it succeeded".⁵⁴⁸

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, other reasons were political violence in Punjab and Assam and the most important of all other major reasons was the creation and the subsequent development of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam. "Bofors began the slide, eroding Rajiv's credibility. Punjab, with its unending and horrific terrorist violence, damaged his reputation as a political negotiator. Assam deepened the mood of secessionism alienating the entire north-east. Sri Lanka quickly developed into a major foreign policy misadventure".⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁸ Minhaz Merchant, Rajiv Gandhi: The End of a Dream (New Delhi: Viking publishers, 1991)

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

It is of great importance to remember that the first three events were directly related to Rajiv Gandhi and affected his political role. All these factors “eroded his image amongst the vote-group which had been initially the most enthusiastic about him; the middle class. Second, it reduced his authority with the party’s rank and file”.⁵⁵⁰ Therefore, the 1989 elections were to mark his successful return to his political career. However, the LTTE factor was not his creation and has a long and violent history of its own. There were factors that during Rajiv’s tenure as Prime Minister precipitated the entire LTTE episode, which can be closely related to his assassination. Hence, in this chapter, an attempt will be made to analyse the complex intricacies linked with the LTTE in detail in order to illustrate the role of the LTTE in the assassination.

Background of the conflict

As has been mentioned before, the Tamil problem dates far back in history. It is understood that while Tamil nationalism dates back to the 1920s, the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka can be traced back to the first century BC, at which time the Tamil adventurers from southern India challenged the authority of the Sinhalese, who had settled on the island from Northern India five hundred years earlier.⁵⁵¹ In fact, the Sinhala chronicles like the Mahawansa and the Chulawansa records violent wars between the Tamil and Sinhala kings, and invasion from South Indian Tamil empires. It is claimed, by historians that the Tamils lived in the north and east of Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese occupied the rest of the country. It was during this period that the Ceylonese campaigned against the colonial domination

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵¹ Gamini Samaranayake, “Ethnic Conflict In Sri Lanka And Prospects of Management: An Empirical Enquiry”, *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer, 1991) p76.

that had lasted 400 years and saw Sri Lanka governed by three colonial powers. The Dutch from 1667-1796 followed by Portuguese who governed from 1505-1667. The Dutch and the Portuguese ruled the Tamils and the Sinhalese as separate entities. Finally, from 1815-1948, Sri Lanka was administered under the British Raj.⁵⁵² It was the British who amalgamated the two states in 1833, irrespective of the ethnic differences that existed.⁵⁵³ However, both groups maintained their own language, religion, culture and social systems. That is, "the Sinhalese and the Tamils of Sri Lanka are by no means homogenous collectivities of people; a vast degree of internal differentiation is to be found among both groups."⁵⁵⁴ As a result, both groups now claim that they are the original settlers on the island. Furthermore, according to Rohan Gunaratna, the Tamil-Sinhala conflict further accelerated when the British decided to bring Tamils from South India to work in the plantation sector of Sri Lanka. "Sri Lanka changed profoundly under the British who developed an export-orientated plantation economy".⁵⁵⁵ They worked under miserable conditions including low wages and a poor standard of living. They were barred from buying their own land or their own homes. It is important to remember that under the British, the three major groups that existed were the Sinhalese, the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Indian Tamils. However, no sense of community existed between the two Tamil groups, irrespective of the fact that they shared a common language.⁵⁵⁶ One very important development that came about because of the British was the spread of

⁵⁵² Gamini Samaranyake, "Political Violence in Sri Lanka: A Diagnostic Approach", Terrorism and Political Violence Vol.9, No2, Summer 1997. p99.

⁵⁵³ Rohan Gunaratna, War and Peace in Sri Lanka, (Sri Lanka: Institute of Fundamental Studies, 1987) p15.

⁵⁵⁴ Sumantra Bose, States, Nations, Sovereignty, Sri Lanka, India and The Tamil Eelam Movement. (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994) p40.

⁵⁵⁵ K.V. Nagarajan, "Troubled Paradise: Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka", Conflict Vol.6, No 4. 1986. p336-337.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. p337.

the English education. It so happened that "the Tamils were especially assiduous in inculcating English because of the prevailing geo-economic reasons".⁵⁵⁷ However, in 1915 following the Sinhalese and Muslim riots, the Ceylon National Party was formed in 1919 after the brutal methods used by the British. This was to mark one of the first instances of trouble on the political front between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Serious differences over power sharing began to emerge between the two. The Doughmore commission came to the island in an attempt to find a way for self - government. During this period, the Tamil leaders expressed their reservations which maintained that under universal suffrage, the Sinhalese would gain an overwhelming majority. However, this appeal was rejected, and based on the commission a new constitution was written. In 1947, the transfer of power was formalised by the Ceylon Independent Act and the United National Party won a majority. On February 4, 1948, the Dominion of Ceylon was proclaimed.

Thus, in 1948, unlike in many other countries, Sri Lanka gained independence by peaceful means. In other words, "the whole process of the transfer of power was so smooth that Sri Lanka in 1948 was even described as an oasis of stability, peace and order".⁵⁵⁸ After independence, the political arena was dominated by westernised attitudes along with orthodox left - wing parties. However, the conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhala seemed to slowly gain momentum. In fact, "ideas and myths regarding the political stability of Sri Lanka's democratic process were shattered by the political violence manifested in

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ Samaranayake, *op.cit.* 'Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka', p75.

the ethnic separatism led by the Tamil (minority) youth and the revolutionary-motivated violence led by the Sinhalese (majority) youth”.⁵⁵⁹

However, “at independence, one of the most vexing problems was the so called Indian question which concerned the political status of the Indian Tamil plantation workers brought to the island in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries”.⁵⁶⁰ The disenfranchisement of the Indian Tamil plantation workers strengthened the two main Sinhalese parties, the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. A split was soon to occur between the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Indian Tamils. “However, a faction in the (Ceylon) Tamil Congress, an organ of the Sri Lankan Tamils, broke away to form the (Tamil) Federal Party”.⁵⁶¹
⁵⁶² The Tamil Federal Party in 1951 declared “the Tamil people’s unchallengeable title to nationhood and ...their right to political autonomy and desire for federal union with the Sinhalese”.⁵⁶³ The main aim of the Federal party was to fight for a federal state.

Another major area of discontent was the issue of the official language. In the 1940s it was agreed by both the Sinhala and the Tamil leaders that both Tamil and Sinhala would be considered the official languages, instead of English. However, in 1956 the Sri Lanka Freedom party declared Sinhala to be the only official language, by the Official Language Act. This was to become a long and bitter dispute. However, the Tamil Language Act of 1966 recognised Tamil as the official language of the Northern and Eastern provinces. In 1972 a Republican

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁰ Nagarajan, *op.cit.* p338.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.* p339.

⁵⁶² The formation of the Federal party was regarded as the important development which was to set the tone for its political agenda. As Nagarajan has stated that the conciliatory tone of the Tamil Congress gave way to the stridency of the Federal Party.

⁵⁶³ Alfred Wilson, *The Break-Up Of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict*, (London: Christopher Hurst, 1988) p55.

constitution was passed. "It granted recognition to Buddhism as the de facto state religion, and re-affirmed the pre-eminence of the Sinhalese language in all aspects of public life".⁵⁶⁴ The issue of language was directly related to the issue of public sector employment. The Northern and Eastern provinces were not conducive to agriculture. As a result employment in the agricultural sector was difficult, which led to Tamils seeking employment in the state and private sector. "Considering the added facilities for English education made available to the Tamils a larger segment of the Tamil people were absorbed into the state sector".⁵⁶⁵ As a result the Sinhala act was seen by the Tamils as a deliberate attempt to restrict the number of Tamils being absorbed into the public sector. What was worse was the fact that Tamils had to prove their proficiency in Sinhala. This conflict between language and employment was further accompanied by competition for university education. In the 1970s medicine and engineering was dominated by Tamil students. Between 1970 and 1973 a system of standardisation was introduced according to which "...the pattern of marking was readjusted according to the media of study combined with a district quota system".⁵⁶⁶ The aim of the standardisation programme was to make sure that senior posts and higher education reflected the ethnic ratio, which further angered the Tamils. However, it can be stated that "a system was devised whereby the average Tamil student would have to score substantially higher marks than the average Sinhalese student in qualifying entrance examinations in order to gain admissions to university medicine and engineering courses".⁵⁶⁷ As result the number of Tamil students declined tremendously. "This action only heightened the sense of discrimination

⁵⁶⁴ Bose, *op.cit.* p68.

⁵⁶⁵ Samaranayake, 'Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka', *op.cit.* p77.

⁵⁶⁶ Samaranayake, 'Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka', *op.cit.* p78.

⁵⁶⁷ Bose, *op.cit.* p69.

felt by the Tamils.”⁵⁶⁸ Furthermore, anti-Tamil riots of 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983 saw the deaths of three thousand Tamils in Sinhalese - dominated areas. Thus, all these factors considerably added to the ethnic conflict that already existed.

The hopes of achieving a federal state were soon to be accompanied by the desire for a separate state. In 1972 the Federal party joined other Tamil political parties, such as the Tamil Congress first being called the coalition Tamil United Front (TUF) and later known as the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). “Although the TULF continued to pursue a non-violent strategy, the other breakaway factions mainly comprised a Tamil youth resorted to guerrilla-cum-terrorist tactics”.⁵⁶⁹ Furthermore, the TULF was planning on forming a terrorist group. To summarise, “Sri Lanka’s opposition Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) is planning to form a new terrorist group and join others in an armed struggle for a separate Tamil state, according to the Sri Lanka Government”.⁵⁷⁰

Creation of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

As a result, the aggravated Tamil youth, who had no hopes of higher education and employment, began to carry out armed attacks against the government. Therefore, as Bose points out, “the Tigers can be regarded, from one angle, as being the products of state policy and the radicalisation of Tamil opinion over four decade”.⁵⁷¹ “The Tamil youth felt that the TUF was not accommodating them, and not allowing them a platform to air their grievances”.⁵⁷² At the outset it is important to clarify whether the LTTE is a terrorist group or a guerrilla

⁵⁶⁸ Robert C. Oberst, “Sri Lanka’s Tamils Tigers”, *Conflict* Vol. 8, Number 2/3, 1988. p190.

⁵⁶⁹ Samaranyake, ‘Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka’, p79.

⁵⁷⁰ “Sri Lanka Tamils Plan Terrorism” *DT* 15/10/1983.

⁵⁷¹ Bose, ‘Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka’, *op.cit.* p83.

⁵⁷² Rohan Gunaratna, *War and Peace*, (Sri Lanka: Institute of fundamental studies, 1987) p31-32.

movement. The US State Department refers to them as terrorists,⁵⁷³ whereas others like Sumantra Bose refer to them as guerrillas. It is true that terrorists are often similar to guerrillas, as they both use methods such as shooting and bombing to intimidate and create fear amongst targets. However, where they do differ is, for example, in the use by guerrillas of armed personnel in large numbers, in their inclination to use military units to attack the enemy in the open, to seize and control territory when they are able to, and to exercise sovereignty and control over an area and its people.⁵⁷⁴ The LTTE is known to have gained de facto control of territories in the North because of their money, guns, power and prestige, as has been pointed out by Purnaka De Silva.⁵⁷⁵ Laksiri Fernando asserts that the "the LTTE in fact ran a mini-state in Jaffna between 1989 and 1995 and still controls certain areas in the Northern Province".⁵⁷⁶

Beginning of violence

The first sign of violence came in mid-1975 when Velupillai Pirabhakaran, then leader of the LTTE, shot the Tamil mayor for Jaffna.⁵⁷⁷ This incident was followed by a successful bank robbery of half a million rupees the following year.

⁵⁷³ Agence France Presse, 8th October 1996, International News, "US To Define Tamil Tigers As Terrorists: Minister".

⁵⁷⁴ For further reference see Bruce Hoffman, 'Inside Terrorism', op.cit. p41.

⁵⁷⁵ Purnaka De Silva, "The Growth of Tamil Paramilitary Nationalism: Sinhala Chauvinism And Tamil Responses", South Asia Journal of South Asian Studies Vol. XX, 1997, p103.

⁵⁷⁶ Laksiri Fernando, "Ethnic Conflict And The State In Sri Lanka: A Possible Solution?", South Asia, Journal Of South Asian Studies Vol. XX, 1997, p93.

⁵⁷⁷ "There have been three insurgencies of different origins and forms. Two represent left-wing insurgencies based on class, while one represents the secessionist insurgency based on the basis of ethnicity. The April insurrection of 1971 by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and its second insurrection from 1987 to 1989 represent the left-wing insurgency, while Tamil Guerrilla warfare of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) since 1972 expresses the separatist or secessionist insurrection". For further reference see Gamini Samaranayake "Political Violence in Sri Lanka: A Diagnostic Approach". Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 1997. Pg99. (The JVP or the People' Liberation Front was a initially a breakaway group from the pro-Communist Party in the mid 1960s.)

It was after this that Pirabhakaran formed the Tamil New Tigers, which became the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).⁵⁷⁸ In 1978 the group successfully blew up an Air Ceylon passenger jet. Today, many would agree that the LTTE is

one of the world's most highly disciplined and effective guerrilla movements, as way and ahead the most developed, resourceful and powerful of South Asian extremist organisations, or simply as the most fearsome terrorist group the world has seen since Sheikh Hassan bin Sabbah founded the sect of assassins⁵⁷⁹

The view is held that "on the political plane the Tiger movement has emerged as the sole spokesman of the Tamil quest for sovereign statehood".⁵⁸⁰ Apart from the Tigers, some of the non - Tiger groups that exist are the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and so on. LTTE and TELO are more nationalist orientated than the other groups. It is known that all groups maintain their own connections. For example, many of the LTTE cadets have been trained in Lebanon and Syria in the Middle East.⁵⁸¹ LTTE receives most of its finances from expatriate Tamils, bank robberies and drug trafficking to carry

⁵⁷⁸ The leadership of the Tamil Tigers is made up of charismatic leaders who are the driving force behind the movement. The leaders are usually university educated who speak English and have connections with the western world. However, Prabhakaran is from humble origins. He is of a middle - class caste and does not speak English fluently. He is a professional revolutionary and had no career before this. He is not an able orator. For further reference see Roberst C. Oberst "Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers", *Conflict* Vol. 8, Number 2/3, 1988. p193.

⁵⁷⁹ Bose, *op.cit.* p85.

⁵⁸⁰ Bose, *op.cit.* p87.

⁵⁸¹ Oberst, *op.cit.* p195.

out its activities. "The ultimate objective of all these groups is to establish a separate Tamil state, which would be named Eelam".⁵⁸² The Tiger movement can be seen to have grown in stages, the first stage being between 1972-1987, the second between 1987-1990 and the third from 1990 onwards. Initially, the Tigers concentrated on assassinating Tamil politicians who collaborated with political parties in office, and police informers.⁵⁸³ From 1977, the targets of attacks were police and armed forces, and from 1984 the targets were Sinhala civilians living in isolated northern and eastern provinces. Soon the attacks on civilians increased to large scale massacres. Some of the worst massacres were when "more than 200 people were killed in May 1985, the mass massacre in Trincomalee where 175 people were killed in April 1987, a bomb blast in Colombo which killed 200 people in 1987."⁵⁸⁴ It can be concluded that the scope of the movement grew in all forms due to the government's failure to acknowledge the problems faced by Tamils. During this period India showed a keen interest in the activities of the militant groups in Sri Lanka. In fact, Indian intelligence organisations were known to have trained a large number of the militants in camps in South India and "there can be no question that the primacy source of outside support for the Tigers came from India".⁵⁸⁵

Measures to counter violence and the IPKF

In 1979, the Prevention of Terrorism Act was implemented. There was the removal of the standardisation policy, the status of the national language was

⁵⁸² Samaranayake, 'Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka', *op.cit.* p80.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p81.

⁵⁸⁵ Oberst, *op.cit.* p194.

altered and political decentralisation was introduced by the District Development Council.⁵⁸⁶ However, the DDC scheme failed, and there was a further increase in violence. "As the guerrilla warfare grew in scope and intensity the government of Sri Lanka turned to foreign countries for assistance".⁵⁸⁷ At this point India feared that the Tamils' call for a separate state would affect its own population's desire for statehood. It is understood that the

principal reason for Indian intervention in the affairs of Sri Lanka was to prevent the aggressive assertion of a Tamil Identity in Sri Lanka from having reflex influence in Tamil Nadu⁵⁸⁸

With Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 India shifted her focus towards Sri Lanka. As a result, in an effort to help solve the Sri Lankan Tamil problem, Rajiv Gandhi got involved with the ethnic conflict as a peace broker in 1985. "He first attempted to play honest broker between the Tamils and the Sinhala-dominated government of Sri Lanka".⁵⁸⁹ The first round of talks was held when Sri Lankan lawyers and jurists met representatives of five of the Tiger groups (PLOTE, EPRLF, EROS, LTTE, and TELO) in August 1985. The second round of talks was held in New Delhi between the government's chief negotiator and the Indian foreign ministry. A ceasefire was attained with the Tigers. "It ultimately broke down in the fall of 1985 amidst claims by the government that the tigers were using it to attack government positions and the "tigers" claiming that the

⁵⁸⁶ Samaranayake, 'Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka', *op.cit.* p82.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p82.

⁵⁸⁸ Manoj Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 19, No.1, 1996, p23.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p24.

government was using the ceasefire to amass men and weapons for an offensive against the Tamils".⁵⁹⁰ This was followed by a new series of meetings with the government, and for the first time, the government made serious concessions to the Tamils. They agreed to establish provincial councils, give control over police power, and power to control some aspects of the colonisation.⁵⁹¹ However, Rajiv Gandhi made it quite clear that "he was not in favour of Tamil secession and that a solution within the federal framework of Sri Lanka, possibly conceding greater regional autonomy to the northern and eastern provinces, was the only way out".⁵⁹² In 1987 it was starting to become apparent that Colombo was gearing towards a military solution and, "increasingly, the distinction between civilian and guerrilla in the northern province was ignored by the Sri Lankan army".⁵⁹³ At this stage India started interfering by supplying humanitarian aid to the Tamils. It was against this backdrop that the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord of June 1987 was negotiated. This accord meant that now the government would have "the powerful Indian army to disarm the rebels; for the Tamil rebels, it meant the intervention of a neutral, even friendly, power, for the Indians, an opportunity to flex its newly acquired muscle, to assert convincingly their regional hegemony, and to marginalise the Americans and Pakistanis from the conflict; and for the Congress Party and Rajiv Gandhi, a likely foreign-policy bonus in the upcoming elections".⁵⁹⁴ According to the Accord, India had committed to preserving the unity of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka would grant autonomy to the Northern and Eastern provinces to form a Tamil majority state. India committed itself not to support

⁵⁹⁰ Oberst, *op.cit.* p197.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.* p197-198.

⁵⁹² Sankaran Krishna, "India and Sri Lanka: A Fatal Convergence", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.15, No.4, 1992 p274.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p275.

militancy among the Tamils and, indeed, to disarm them within a week of a ceasefire. However, from the beginning the Accord was doomed. "First, Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the LTTE, despite strenuous efforts to secure his agreement to the treaty, refused to endorse it explicitly.... He made his feelings clear on the matter: "India was overly keen on striking an Accord [because it] protected India's interests in the region".⁵⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Accord was seen as providing little to the LTTE. Prabhakaran claimed that he agreed to the treaty because he was being held hostage in New Delhi. It is important to note that while the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) was stationed in Sri Lanka they killed significant number of Tamils. At the same time the LTTE inflicted heavy casualties on the IPKF. Rough estimates tell us that 500 were killed and 1500 injured.⁵⁹⁶

The IPKF was soon to become a means of uniting both the Northern Tamils and the Sinhalese, as both were constantly fearful of the intentions of the regional superpower. Therefore, for once the Sinhalese and the Tamils had something in common - the desire to get rid of the IPKF. With this in mind the LTTE entered into talks with the government in August 1989. At this point the LTTE established the political wing called the People's Front of Liberation Tigers (PFLT) and they made a real effort to show that they were entering the political stream. However, in reality the LTTE had established the PFLT as a tactical, temporary measure to gain the government's confidence with the real objective of securing the departure of the Indian forces from its Northern homeland. The IPKF left in March 1990 and this was followed by the dissolution of the PFLT. With the departure of the IPKF the widely - held view was that the LTTE was the only

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Pauletta Otis and Christopher D. Carr, "Sri Lanka and the Ethnic Conflict" in Conflict Vol. 8, No 2/3, 1988. p213.

means for the Tamils to express their views. "The extreme harshness of the Indian occupation brutalised Tamil society almost beyond redemption, and convinced thousands of young Tamils, of both sexes and all the socio-economic backgrounds, that the Tiger path was the only path for them to take".⁵⁹⁷ The group had grown from 4000 to 10,000 fighters. The Tamils came to believe that violence was the only way forward. The ceasefire initiated in August came to an end when hundreds of policemen were killed in 1990. At this time Rajiv Gandhi, who was responsible for the IPKF, was running for office, and was assassinated by an LTTE suicide bomber. In this context "as the Tigers have themselves observed: the struggle for self determination of the Eelam Tamils has an evolutionary history extending to over 40 years...the armed struggle is a historical product of intolerable national oppression; is an extension, continuation and advancement of the political struggle of our oppressed people".⁵⁹⁸

The Assassination

May 21st, 1991 was like any other day for Gandhi before the elections He was campaigning for the upcoming elections in Sriperumbudur near Madras. He was trying to fit in as many constituencies as possible during the day, and was then scheduled to fly to the Southern states. At dusk, just before his flight, the airport authorities informed him that due to poor visibility he should avoid flying to Madras. Additionally, the aeroplane had developed some technical problems and the airport did not have night take - off facilities. Rajiv reluctantly had to go to Madras the following day or cancel going to Madras altogether. On the way back

⁵⁹⁷ Bose, *op.cit.* p172.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.* pg 93. pg.80.

to the city, a message was given to Rajiv Gandhi stating that visibility had improved, and asking whether he would like to travel to Madras after all. Rajiv decided to fly to Madras. He arrived in Madras an hour behind schedule. Meanwhile also on 21st May, two women and a man surveyed the location where Rajiv was to deliver his speech. No one took any notice of the three as they decided to put their plan into action. As Rajiv emerged from the car and walked towards the dais the assassin and accomplices waited with the crowd. As the accomplice's turn came to greet Rajiv she placed a garland around his neck and then bent down to touch his feet as a sign of respect. The assassin Subha pulled the trigger to the bomb, which was a belt strapped to the assassin's waist. It consisted of six lethal grenades. The nation was shell-shocked. As time passed it became apparent that the LTTE were the primary suspects behind the assassination. "The gruesome incident brings to the fore the diabolical plans of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)".⁵⁹⁹

Having examined the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi this chapter will now analyse the three questions once again with reference to this assassination.

Can the justifications that are analysed justify the political assassinations in this thesis?

Consequentialism maintains that the political assassination of Rajiv Gandhi did not have good consequences for all the people in Sri Lanka. The good consequences were restricted to the Tamil population, and they did not apply to

⁵⁹⁹ Rajiv Sharma, "Beyond The Tigers, Tracking Rajiv Gandhi's Assassination", (New Delhi:Kaveri Books, 1998) pg xxi.

the larger population in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, assassination of Rajiv Gandhi cannot be considered the best option available to the assassin, as other options were not considered. Thus, consequentialism cannot be used to justify the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. According to utilitarianism, an action is right if it is responsible for promoting further happiness or pleasure. As a result actions which produce further happiness and pleasure are good and actions that promote pain and unhappiness are bad. According to Classical or Hedonistic utilitarianism, the most important principle is that an action needs only to promote happiness. In this case, the political assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was committed by the LTTE in order to bring happiness to the Tamils of Sri Lanka, who form a minority in Sri Lanka. The happiness produced by the assassination was not felt by the Sinhalese population of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the assassination cannot be justified. According to another form of utilitarianism, which is Ideal utilitarianism, there are other things that are also important, like virtue, love, knowledge and beauty. However, at the end, the most important thing is to promote happiness. This did not occur with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Furthermore, a significant aspect of utilitarianism is that it believes that people act out of self - interest. In fact, this concept of self - interest is related to theological utilitarianism where promoting happiness is regarded as the purpose of God. However, this is not always true, especially with regard to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, There was no religious angle to the entire assassination event. That is, the assassins were not acting out of any obligation to God nor was there any religious significance to the date, time and place of the assassination. The ultimate goal was the promotion of happiness, which did not happen, and therefore did not justify the assassination. According to

contemporary utilitarianism the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi did not result in greater utility for the Tamil population of Sri Lanka and cannot therefore be justified. More specifically, according to both versions of act utilitarianism, it is interesting to note that the political assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was not justified. This is because there was no way of knowing what the consequences would be of alternatives. In summary, none of the versions justify the assassination based on the level of utility, which was high. Rule utilitarianism justifies an act on the basis of rules and the utility of these rules. Rule utilitarianism states that prohibiting acts of murder, torture, political assassinations and so on can be justified, because prohibiting them may produce more good than rules against prohibiting them. However, these acts are only justified if they have greater utility than prohibiting them. It is apparent that Rajiv Gandhi's assassination did not have greater utility than not carrying out the assassination. Thus, from the above analyses, it can be concluded that consequentialism and utilitarianism do not justify the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

Just War

As has been previously mentioned, there are six requirements that need to be fulfilled for the use of force to be justified.

Just Cause is the first requirement which maintains that the use of force is permitted if there is a real danger. The Just Cause requirement cannot really be addressed with Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. It was the Sri Lankan government that approached the Indian government for help in order to restore peace in Sri

Lanka. The Tamil population over - reacted to the Indian involvement, and made it out to be something more than it was. The enemy in this case should have been their own government, and as a result there was no Just Cause to the assassination.

According to right intention, the assassination of Gandhi cannot be justified because there was no right intention. Gandhi was assassinated for interfering in Sri Lankan affairs, which has been encouraged by Sri Lanka. As a result, right intention does not justify the act.

According to popular authority and public declaration the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi cannot be justified, because the decision to assassinate him was made by a terrorist group which does not constitute popular authority, as the terrorist group represents a minority of the community. Also, public declaration of the act was not possible as it would then have become difficult to carry out the assassination.

The next requirement is last resort. Rajiv's assassination was not the last resort. The assassin did not even consider any other action before assassinating Gandhi. The assassin wanted revenge and assassinating Gandhi was the only option.

Regarding probability of success, the assassin was going to carry out the assassination not knowing what the outcome was going to be. There was no guarantee that the act would actually have the desired effect. Therefore, the probability of success could not have been known.

Finally, according to proportionality which states that the cost of the use of force must be in proportion to the good expected from taking up arms. Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, however, was different as the good that came out of it was expected. It did end the Indian involvement in Sri Lanka.

Terroristic Justifications

What is interesting about Rajiv Gandhi's assassination is that it did not have the religious element which played a strong role in the other two assassinations. The Tamil Tigers did not seek permission from any religious authority. Subha, the assassin, did not exhibit any specific religious inclinations and no religious justification was sought for committing the act. The assassination was carried out for very practical reasons. Thus, the role of terroristic justification in this case did not form a significant part of the assassination.

Do political assassinations only succeed as existential acts?

Finally, Gandhi's assassination did succeed as an existential act. Subha chose to join the suicide squad and was therefore trained to be an assassin. The assassin Subha was part of the suicide squad of the Tamil Tigers. She was trained in the knowledge that her mission would ultimately lead to her death. This suggests that being an assassin was an important part of her existence. Another important point about Subha was that she did not know who her target was going to be until the day before the assassination. Therefore, it did not matter who the target was only that she was out there to carry out a mission successfully, irrespective of who the target was going to be. This shows the existential nature of assassination. Hence this is a good example that illustrates that a political assassination does succeed as an existential act. Once again, in terms of immediate success, the assassin Subha did successfully assassinate

Rajiv Gandhi. The assassin was also successful in existential terms as has been illustrated above, and finally the assassination was a success as she had removed the person responsible for interfering in Sri Lankans' internal political affairs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter illustrated the history of the political problems in Sri Lanka and the connections of these problems with India. It showed how the Tamils wanted to end Indian involvement in future affairs of Sri Lanka. Gandhi was the person mainly responsible for Indian involvement in Sri Lankan affairs and this made him the target of a political assassination by the LTTE. Again, Gandhi's assassination cannot therefore be justified by the consequentialist, non consequentialist and terroristic justifications.

Thus, having now examined the three case studies, the next chapter will seek to answer the typology posed in Chapter One and present conclusions. The following chapter will also include an examination of the similarities and differences between the cases which are important in order to have a well - rounded understanding of the phenomenon of the political assassination. This will be followed by the conclusion to the thesis.

Chapter 6

Political Assassination Regimes

One important thing that this research has established is that political assassination is a very interesting phenomenon and that there is room in the socio scientific field for further research to be carried out into political assassination. Political assassination is a phenomenon, which has occurred for centuries and continues today. With the development of communications and technological advances it is only more likely that the capacity to commit political assassinations will be greater. This has always been an area which has not attracted enough attention, but such developments should encourage people to study the phenomenon in greater detail, as the potential for such acts to be committed more successfully may well increase. This is an issue that needs to be addressed as political assassination can destabilise a country, and in turn, create further unrest. This was seen in the recent assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic. It was been reported by correspondents that "assassination of the prime minister heralds the start of turbulent days for Serbia, leaving the country with a potentially dangerous political power vacuum".⁶⁰⁰ Therefore, there has to be an effort to try and counter such attacks in the future, and especially to try and prevent any increase in such activity.

This thesis has so far only looked at political assassinations committed by non - state actors against state actors. However, attention should also be paid to political assassinations committed by state actors

⁶⁰⁰ BBC News, Serbian premier assassinated. Wednesday 12th of March.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2843433.stm>

against other state actors or non - state actors. This is because recent events with America attempting to take out Saddam Hussein, and the United States' numerous attempts at assassinating various terrorist leaders, clearly show how the United States is violating its assassination policy 'Executive Order 12,333'. This is evident from the fact that President Bush has "authorized the Central Intelligence Agency to assassinate anyone on a list of suspected terrorists, at will, if it can "minimize civilian casualties".⁶⁰¹

The Treaties on Assassinations

An important point about bans on assassination is that "a proper understanding of present prohibitions on assassinations requires a recognition that these prohibitions are the product of long and systemic refinement of the rules governing the use of force".⁶⁰² The Executive Order was based on the Hague Convention of 1907, Article 23(b) which stated that "it is especially forbidden ... to kill or wound treacherously, individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army".⁶⁰³ President Gerald Ford issued this ban on assassinations in February 18th, 1976, according to which "no employee of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, political assassination".⁶⁰⁴ This subsequently became known as the 'Executive Order 12,333', which was also reissued, by

⁶⁰¹ Bush Authorises Assassinations of Suspected Terrorists by CIA, 12/16/2002. <http://www.onetermpresident.com/index.cfm?startitemid=334&category=liberty>.

⁶⁰² Michael N. Schmitt, State-Sponsored Assassination in International and Domestic Law, in *Yale Journal of International Law*, 17, 1992. p613.

⁶⁰³ See Hague Convention (No. iv) Convention, Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land. Article 23 (b) <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/hague/hague5>.

⁶⁰⁴ Executive order 11,905, United Nations Foreign Intelligence Activities, http://resource.lawlinks.com/Content/Legal_Research/Executive_Orders/1964%20-%201992/executive_order_11905.htm, Section 5. (g) Restrictions on Intelligence Activities.

Jimmy Carter, Ronald Regan and George Bush. This order in recent times has been violated since September 11th. However, the executive order does suffer from a number problems. In the first instance the order does not define clearly the concept of assassination. As a result, it is a very ambiguous order in terms of what constitutes a political assassination. The United States current position seems to be that the executive order does not cover terrorists so they are not protected by the order. The Yemen episode where “the lethal missile strike killed a suspected leader of Al Qaeda in Yemen was carried out under broad authority that President Bush has given the C.I.A.”⁶⁰⁵ shows that it would be permissible to assassinate terrorists. This has been the official position of the United States since September 11th when “President Bush has provided written legal authority to the C.I.A. to hunt down and kill the terrorists without seeking further approval each time the agency is about to stage an operation”.⁶⁰⁶ Also, Donald Rumsfeld has stated that

it is not possible to defend yourself against terrorists at every single location in the world and at every single moment. The only way to deal with terrorists is to take the battle to them and find them and root them out and that's self-defence. We're going after these

⁶⁰⁵ David Johnston and David E. Sanger, Threats and Responses: Hunts for Suspects; Fatal Strike in Yemen Was Based on Rules Set Out by Bush, New York Times, 6th November 2002.

⁶⁰⁶ James Risen and David Johnston, Bush Has widened authority of CIA to kill terrorists, New York Times, 15 December 2002.

people and their organisations and capabilities and to stop them killing Americans⁶⁰⁷

Thus, it seems that there are circumstances under which certain assassinations are permitted. One of the most important things about the Executive Order is that it does not define what it means by individuals. As a result, it is easy to interpret the Order in order to suit vested interests. It had been stated that "Bush can "circumvent the ban and legally carry out an assassination," asserted Scharf, now a law professor and director of the Center for International Law and Policy at the New England School of Law.

He cites four ways it can be done:

1. Bush can declare "the existence of hostilities" and target persons in command positions, such as bin Laden, as "combatants."
2. He can rationalize a targeted attack on bin Laden as a legitimate self-defense operation under Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, in light of evidence that bin Laden and al-Qaida were planning future attacks against the U.S.
3. More, he can narrowly interpret Executive Order 12333 to prohibit only "treacherous" attacks on foreign leaders.
4. Or, the president can simply repeal or amend the order – "or even approve a one-time exception to it," he said⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁷ David Gow, Bush gives Green Light to CIA for Assassination of Foreign Terrorists, The Guardian 29 October, 2001

Therefore, there are ways in which the Executive Order can be manipulated. Furthermore, there have been occasions when it is known that the CIA has been involved in plots to assassinate Cuba's Fidel Castro, Colonel Muammar el-Gaddafi of Libya, and more recently, Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Evidence of this can be found when Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael Dugan "boasted that if war actually erupted between the United States and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, American planes would probably target Saddam, his family, and his mistress".⁶⁰⁹ Again, with the assassination of Gaddafi, it was stated by Reagan that "invoking Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, characterized the attack on Gaddafi as a legitimate use of force in self-defence".⁶¹⁰ This resulted in questions being raised about the order and its legality and it was suggested by senior U.S. Army lawyers that "Executive Order 12333 was not intended to stop the U.S. from acting in self defence against "legitimate threats to national security".⁶¹¹

This ambiguity with the Executive Order prompted debate about whether the order protected leaders of other states or if it is possible for the President of the United States to order the assassination of a political figure. It is understood that the President can ignore the order and "legally carry out the assassination of a foreign leader in four ways. He could:

⁶⁰⁸ Paul Sperry, [Bush can legally order bin Laden assassinated](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=24861)
Ex-State Dept. lawyer says executive order banning such action can be 'circumvented',
World Daily Net, 10 October 2001.

http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=24861

⁶⁰⁹ Johnson, op.cit. p401.

⁶¹⁰ Sperry, op.cit. http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=24861

⁶¹¹ Sperry, op.cit. http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=24861

- (1) Ask congress to declare war, in which case a foreign leader exercising command responsibility would become a legitimate target;
- (2) Construe Article 51 of the United Nations Charter to permit the assassinations of a foreign leader based on either a right to self defense or a right to respond to criminal activities
- (3) Narrowly interpret the order as not restricting the President as long as long he does not approve specific plans for the killing of individuals
- (4) Overrule order, create an exception to it, or permit the congress to do the same".⁶¹²

Hence, not only can the President of the United States legitimise the assassination of terrorist leaders, but it is also possible now for the President to legitimise the assassination of foreign leaders. Therefore, this does beg the question of what is the point of even having an Executive Order which can be manipulated in order to suit national interests.

The Hague Convention also suffers from a few drawbacks. This is not surprising, since the treaty was first drafted in 1907. The treaty does not directly address the issue of political assassinations. The treaty seems to suggest that killing people is banned under conditions of war. This is because the Convention tries to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. Also, the term 'treacherously' is not defined properly.

⁶¹² Johnson, op.cit. p403.

In addition to the Hague Convention, there are other treaties that prohibit carrying out assassinations. Some of these treaties include the UN Charter, the Convention of Internationally Protected Persons (New York Convention), the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity.

The UN Charter was the first charter to have legal prohibitions against the use of force. In the Charter, Article 2 (4) states:

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations

This article clearly states that no member state will be involved in any use of force against any other state. This Charter does in no way make any specific references to assassinations. It is a very vague prohibition regarding to whom the law really applies. In one sense this would also include not assassinating another head of state, but at the same time the prohibition could be applied to a terrorist organisation that poses a threat to international peace. It has been pointed out by Anthony Clark Arend and Robert J Beck that, in addition to stating the non - use of force, the Charter does have four exceptions to the rule. These include force used in self defence, force authorised by the security council, that undertaken by the five major powers before the Security Council and force undertaken

against the enemy states of the Second World War.⁶¹³ As a result there is a way in which a state, if need be, can use force against another state, and have an excuse for doing it.

As with the Executive Order 12333, the Convention of Internationally Protected Persons and the European Convention suffer from some problems which raises issues regarding how effective these treaties can be in the long term. The New York Convention States in Article 1, that for the purposes of this Convention:

internationally protected person" means: a Head of State, including any member of a collegial body performing the functions of a Head of State under the constitution of the State concerned, a Head of Government or a Minister for Foreign Affairs, whenever any such person is in a foreign State, as well as members of his family who accompany him⁶¹⁴

An indept analysis illustrates that throughout the convention the protection is offered to persons who are abroad. As a result if the person targeted for assassination is in his home country, then he is not covered by the provision of the treaty. The treaty, however, does specify that it refers to protected persons meaning specifically heads of states. This treaty

⁶¹³ Anthony Clark Arend and Robert J Beck, *International Law and the Use of Force: Beyond the UN Charter Paradigm* 31 (1993) in *Terrorism and Counter Terrorism, Understanding the New Security Environment*. Russell D. Howard and Reid L Sawyer (Connecticut: McGraw – Hill publishers, 2002) p524.

⁶¹⁴ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons (New York Convention, 1973)
<http://www.usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/protectpersons.htm>.

therefore does not in anyway offer protection to terrorists. Thus, the convention is not a sound foundation for forbidding assassinations.

In the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism it states that “a serious offence involving an attack against the life, physical integrity or liberty of internationally protected persons, including diplomatic agents”⁶¹⁵ is banned. Again in this convention there is no distinction between an assassination conducted within a state or abroad. This convention, however, is strictly to do with suppressing terrorism and does not necessarily focus on prohibiting assassinations. Assassination is covered under the broad umbrella of terrorism. As a result this convention also fails to provide proper laws aimed strictly at eliminating assassinations.

Finally, the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity, in Article III (5) states its, “unreserved condemnation, in all its forms, of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighbouring States or any other State”.⁶¹⁶ This seems to be the most coherent ban on assassinations that exists today. The Charter however does not specify who it is directed towards. Therefore, the Charter could apply to both heads of states or terrorist. It clearly states the need to refrain from political assassinations by all states.

Thus, the entire debate on having an international law banning assassination is a contentious issue. As can be seen from the prohibitions that exist that there is room for a more stringent set of laws to be created.

⁶¹⁵ European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. Article (1)
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Html>.

⁶¹⁶ Modern History Sourcebook: Charter of the Organisation of African Unity, Article III (5).
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/19630AU-charter.html>.

With the way things stand at present the United States violating the Executive Order makes a mockery of such laws. If a hegemon such as the United States can violate laws on assassination, it reflects on the validity of universal laws that exist. Furthermore, this kind of action makes way for other countries to disregard prohibitions on assassinations. Thus, the United States as a result is legitimising assassinations of not only terrorists but of foreign leaders too.

Another important aspect that does need to be addressed when discussing laws on assassination is the concept of whether the laws prohibit assassination under conditions of war. The simple answer to this would be that "when a condition of war exists between states, international law normally treats transnational assassination as a war crime".⁶¹⁷ The banning of assassinations under a state of war was first established during the American Civil War. It was revised and disseminated as the General Order 100 by President Lincoln. The Order stated that:

the law of war does not allow proclaiming either an individual belonging to the hostile army, or a citizen, or a subject of the hostile government, an outlaw, who may be slain without trial by any captor, any more than the modern law of peace allows such intentional outlawry; on the contrary, it abhors such outrage. The sternest retaliation should follow the murder committed in consequence of

⁶¹⁷ Louis R. Beres, *The Permissibility of State Sponsored Assassination During Peace and War in Temple International and Comparative Law Journal*, 5, 1991.p236.

such proclamation, made by whatever authority.
Civilized nations look with horror upon offers of
rewards for the assassination of enemies as relapses
into barbarism⁶¹⁸

Once again the Order suffers from definitional confusion. The exact meaning of the term assassination is not explained which makes the declaration unclear. Another effort was made at banning assassinations under conditions of war under the Brussels Declaration, 1874, which states that "According to this principle are especially 'forbidden': (a) Employment of poison or poisoned weapons; (b) Murder by treachery of individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army".⁶¹⁹ This declaration did not directly address the prohibition of assassinations. It refers more to betrayal of people in conditions of war. As a result this declaration did not provide a sound basis for banning assassinations. This declaration was followed by the Oxford Manual in 1880. This was established by Gustave Moynier, who states that "it is forbidden to make treacherous attempts upon the life of an enemy; as, for example, by keeping assassins in pay or by feigning to surrender".⁶²⁰ Here again there was no direct implication of banning assassinations. The interesting thing is the use of the term "treacherous" specially in times of war. The reason for this is explained by Schmitt: as

⁶¹⁸ General Order 100, Article 148, April 24, 1863.

<http://franklaughter.tripod.com/cgi-bin/histprof/misc/genord100.html>.

⁶¹⁹ University of Minnesota, Human Rights Library, Project of an International Declaration concerning the Laws and Customs of War, Brussels, August 27, 1874.

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/1874a.htm>.

⁶²⁰ University of Minnesota, Human Rights Library, The Laws of War on Land, Manual published by the Institute of International Law (Oxford Manual), Adopted by the Institute of International Law at Oxford, September 9, 1880.

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/1880a.htm>.

treachery was historically “a critical component of assassination”.⁶²¹ The declaration would have had more importance if it explained the exact definition of the term treacherous. This is because “efforts focused on the issue of treachery without specifically citing assassination”.⁶²² Thus, the Declarations were not best suited to banning assassinations. In addition, there are a number of other prohibitions that exist, such as the US Army Manual and there is also UK version of the manual. Both manuals forbid treacherous killing.⁶²³ The main difference between prohibitions on assassination in peace time and war time is that the laws usually distinguish between combatants and non - combatants. In other words,

the peacetime ban serves to protect individuals involved in international affairs. In other words, the ban is a recognition that the death of specific individuals will upset stability in the international system. The war prohibition focuses on the method used to kill, not on the legitimacy of the target⁶²⁴

Thus, the above discussion shows that there are two types of laws prohibiting assassinations that are relevant both in peace time and in times of war.

Another interesting point is whether political assassination committed by state actors against other state actors, such as the United States role in trying to assassinate Fidel Castro and Mohammad Qaddafi

⁶²¹ Schmitt, op.cit. p633.

⁶²² Ibid. p630.

⁶²³ For more information see, Schmitt, p631-632.

⁶²⁴ Ibid. p633. in footnote 120.

and non - state actors such as Bin Laden, is leading to a new form of system in the international political system. Is this going to imply that the concept of targeted killing is coming into force? We are already aware of the fact that the Israeli government has started a policy of targeted killing of terrorist suspects. The interesting thing about this is that "Israelis dislike the term assassination policy. They would rather use another extrajudicial punishment, selective targeting, or long-range hot pursuit – to describe the pillar of their counter terrorism doctrine".⁶²⁵

Israeli Defence Forces provide conditions under which such actions can take place. These include:

- There must be well-supported information showing the terrorist will plan or carry out a terror attack in the near future.
- The policy can be enacted only after appeals to the Palestinian Authority calling for the terrorist's arrest have been ignored.
- Attempts to arrest the suspect by use of IDF troops have failed.
- The assassination is not to be carried out in retribution for events of the past. Instead it can only be done to prevent

⁶²⁵ Gal Luft, The Logic of Israel's Targeted Killing, The Middle East Quarterly Winter 2003, Volume X, Number 1. p1.

attacks in the future which are liable to toll multiple casualties.⁶²⁶

This policy was encouraged with the hope that this would deter terrorist attacks. At the moment it seems that there has been no immediate success in implementing the policy. Although in the short term targeted killing has increased attack on the Israeli population, IDF feels that eventually in the long term it may weaken the terror networks. Also, this sort of a policy is an infringement of the sovereignty of a state. However, in this case, Israel could argue that the Palestinian Authority has not been declared a state and as a result "from a legal point of view, is not bound by the set of norms, rules, and treaties with which most states comply".⁶²⁷ Furthermore, the other aspect of targeted killing is that there does not exist any international law banning targeted killing in comparison to the laws against political assassination. One interesting thing about targeted killing is that it raises questions about whether it constitutes an assassination. Therefore in generic terms targeted killing is an assassination and if the victim is a political figure, the perpetrator has a political motive and there will be political consequences, then it is a political assassination.

⁶²⁶ Amos Harel and Gideon Alon, IDF Lawyers Set Conditions for Assassination Policy, Ha'aretz Daily, 4 February 2002, <http://www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=125404>

⁶²⁷ Gal Luft, op.cit.

Implications

Thus, a number of implications arising from the strengthening or weakening of the regime following assassinations can be noted. It can surely be said that recent events show that the regime of prohibiting assassination is at a turning point. Furthermore, both domestically and internationally this regime has been weakened. The above discussion illustrates that there is a need for the regime to be strengthened, and not weakened.

A weakened regime indicates that there is a potential for increased instability in the international system. The United States as a hegemon in the international system has revoked its Executive Order 12,333 banning assassinations, which sets a bad example to other states. This manipulation of the Order indirectly influences the other international orders that exist and makes them less important. This kind of action by a hyper - power also gives incentives to other countries to carry out assassinations, and in an indirect way, legitimises such actions. This would only fuel further instability in the international system. Thus, this is an important area that really needs to be addressed by the international community in order to create a stable environment.

A brief examination does show that the laws are not perfect and it is possible to violate them easily. If anything, the laws need to be strengthened in order to create a stable international order. This leaves the desire for coherent and strict laws to be formulated with clear definitional

explanations. This would help reduce the confusion that exists with respect to what the laws really mean and to whom they apply. Also, the laws need to make a clear distinction between heads of states and individuals who pose a threat to the international system: that is whether the laws are targeted towards state actors or non – state actors. Also, one needs to address issues such as assassinations in peace time and times of war. Furthermore, it is important to make sure that countries such as the United States do not violate laws. Since they are the hegemon in the contemporary world, it is their responsibility to be a model for the world by obeying laws and contributing to stability between states.

Conclusion

The conclusion will begin by examining the similarities and differences that were found in the three case studies in the thesis. The similarities and differences will focus on three particular themes. These themes are target, ideology and motives and finally the aims. This gives an idea of how targets are chosen whether there is any significance of the target, what is the importance of ideology and motives and finally what are the aims of the assassins.

Target

The target in a political assassination is a crucial factor. This can even be seen in the assassinations of the three leaders in this thesis. One thing that is most obvious from the assassinations of Sadat and Rabin is the importance of religion and political goals. In both the assassinations heads of state were the victims, which obviously suggests that the assassins were hoping to gain political ends. This is due to the fact that political actions are viewed as a reflection of the head of states' desires, and the assassin tends to view him as the sole cause of all incorrect political actions. In the case of Islambouli, he viewed Sadat as an apostate. This is evident as during his trial he stated the "assassination of Sadat was the logical consequence of Faraj's and his

reasoning about Tartars".⁶²⁸ Islambouli saw the Camp David Accords as a betrayal by not only the government but more specifically, Sadat. Sadat was establishing ties with a country which was responsible for taking away land from the Egyptians in 1967. Additionally, Sadat's open - door policies did not improve the social and economic conditions in Egypt. In fact, the situation went in the opposite direction. The population was marked by unemployment, low levels of literacy, poor housing, water problems and high levels of poverty. In the economic sphere, there existed inflation, a rising standard of living, a decline in agriculture and trade, and debt. Islambouli must have experienced all these socio-economic variations. He was a fundamentalist and these political developments were articulated by Islambouli as punishments for diverting from the path of Islam. Also, Sadat's turn towards the West, particularly the United States was totally in defiance of religion thus Islamic fundamentalism was turning against Sadat. Also, Sadat's asylum for the Shah of Iran infuriated the fundamentalists. Finally, the fundamentalists could not envision the accomplishment of their ultimate dream, that is the establishment of the state based on the Sharia. Instead, Sadat was responsible for all the impoverishment in society. His inclination towards the United States was a grave mistake, and if he was a true Muslim, he would never allow the interference of a country which was on a mission to destroy Islam. As mentioned before, the policies initiated by Sadat were against Islamic ruling, and this was seen as the main reason for the suffering of the Muslims in Egyptian society. The victory of the 1973 war was the result of God wanting the Egyptians to win. It required the use of violence, and because this was in

⁶²⁸Gilles Kepel, The Prophet & Pharaoh. Muslim Extremism in Egypt. (Thetford Press Ltd, 1985) p211.

compliance with religion, it was justified. Furthermore, the 1979 Camp David Accords were against Islamic doctrine, as it was establishing relations with its enemy and if Sadat pursued this, he was not following the tenets of Islamic religion. Islambouli thus saw all the political developments from a religious perspective which provided the motivation for Sadat's assassination. At the same time, Islambouli had a personal motivation and this was the arrest of his brother prior to Sadat's death. Islambouli clearly established the difference between being an apostate and an unbeliever. Although both are evil, it is necessary to get rid of evil enemies before turning the attack on external enemies. All in all Sadat did not establish what is considered the desire of most Egyptians, an Islamic state based on the Islamic law, the Sharia. On the other hand, Amir's choice of target was definitely bound to be Rabin, largely due to the most important political event the 'Peace Process', to affect the region in over a decade. Amir was regarded as "one of the most single minded".⁶²⁹ Due to his religious upbringing he began to identify with the Peace Process in religious terms. This move by the government was seen as a definite diversion from the path of religion because "there is no question that the political left, whose primary leader was Rabin himself, used rhetoric which profoundly disenfranchised the persons and aspirations of the religious-political right".⁶³⁰ The war of 1967 marked a special religious event. It marked the return of the biblical land which was meant to be a part of Israel. Most importantly the victory of Israel was a result of God's wish. By participating and signing the treaty, Rabin was defying God and giving away land which was given to Jews by God. This was Amir's vision, and the only

⁶²⁹Yigal Amir: inside the mind of a killer. U.S. News and World Report. 20/11/1995.

⁶³⁰The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, <http://shamash.org/mail-jewish/Rabin/Sokol.txt>

practical solution he saw in order to end the Peace Process was to assassinate the main person involved. Similarly, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi happened to be the logical choice of target by the Tamil Tigers as he was responsible for the installation of Indian peace keeping forces in Sri Lanka. In the initial years, Gandhi supported the LTTE as they were all of Tamil origin. He pumped a lot of money into the LTTE cause. Suddenly things changed and Gandhi seemed to befriend the Sri Lankan Government. He banned all LTTE activity that was being carried out in Tamil Nadu. All this did not go down well with the LTTE. The final straw came with the deployment of the Indian peace keeping forces in Sri Lanka. Thus, in this case the target was chosen purely for tactical reasons. Gandhi was the person they held responsible for interfering in Sri Lankan affairs. This assassination was not committed for any religious reasons. Thus, the intrinsic connection between politics and religion is evident in the assassination of both Sadat and Rabin.

Ideology and Motives

Ideology played an important part for Sadat's assassin and Rabin's assassin. In Sadat's and Rabin's assassinations ideology provided the motive for the assassination. That is, ideology and motives have an intrinsic connection. Therefore, they both need to be examined together. The role of ideology did not really exist in Gandhi's assassination. The reason for this is that religion had a huge influence on both Sadat's and Rabin's assassination, as opposed to Gandhi's assassination where the influence of religion was non-existent.

With regards to ideology, for Islambouli politics and religion were very strongly linked. He witnessed a phase of transition which characterised Egyptian society for example, the change from socialism to capitalism, and new economic policies being introduced. He was characterised as a fundamentalist and the roots of fundamentalism go far back in society an organisation like the Muslim Brotherhood made fundamentalists a strong force in society. As a result of his association with the *al Jihad* group, a splinter organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood, Islambouli's ideology was heavily influenced by Muslim Brotherhood main ideologues like Sayyid Qutb and Abd al Salam Faraj. Due to the policies in Egyptian society, Islambouli felt that society was in a state of Jahiliyya, or ignorance, as proclaimed by Qutb. This he attributed to the increased foreign influence in society which pushed Islam in the corner. This state of Jahiliyya was created because of reforms introduced by Sadat in society. This created the need to destroy the existing system of ignorance in order to build an Islamic state. Qutb proclaimed that obedience to a ruler was dependent on the establishment of the Sharia by the ruler. Though the Sharia was made the main source of legislation, society still did not comply totally in accordance with the law. This created another reason for further discontent. Therefore, in such an environment, it was necessary for a dedicated Muslim to wage a Jihad or Holy War against the sinful person or society. "The underlying notion of war against such evil enemies, domestic and external is distilled in the quintessential notion of Jihad".⁶³¹ Sadat was the cause of such unrest in society and a hindrance to the Muslim people's desires, and Islambouli saw

⁶³¹Israeli Raphel, "Islamikaze and their Significance", in Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 9, No 3. p109.

the need to assassinate him. In this respect Sayyid Qutb represents the messianic component of the true Islamic fundamentalist ideology, emphasising the return of the Messiah and escape from Jahiliyya. Faraj made it clear that Sadat was an apostate as he accepted all foreign influences, and most importantly, established ties with an enemy, and therefore a *Jihad* waged against him was justified. As Islambouli stated, "I am guilty of killing Sadat...I am proud of that. This is a religious case".⁶³² Furthermore, once an Islamic state was established it would pave the way for the coming of the Messiah. Thus, the main guiding factor for Islambouli to assassinate Sadat was *Jihad* or Holy War. Faraj claimed that Jihad inevitably included fighting and the shedding of blood. He further maintained that the, "Quran and the Hadith are fundamentally about warfare"⁶³³, thus outlining an innovative interpretation of the *Quran* typical of contemporary Islamist groups. This illustrates a strong opposition to any non violent means to achieve the desired end. Islambouli, therefore, relied on the *Quran* and the *Hadith* which he interpreted to suit his actions. He therefore claimed that the *Quran* and *Hadith* motivated him to assassinate Sadat, as this was Jihad. At the same time Islambouli must have considered himself to be a martyr which is generally a concept furthered by religious leaders. The end of dying in the fight for religion constitutes a privilege and honour for believers. The role played by religious leaders in influencing Islambouli is prominent as a result of their ideology, which in turn influences motives. Islambouli had been motivated by the ideas of Sayyid Qutb and Abd al-Salam Faraj, both of whom were very violent in their teachings. Islambouli's motive, "to carry out God's orders is

⁶³²I am proud of killing Sadat says accused. 1/12/1981. Indian Express (New Delhi).

⁶³³Israeli, op.cit p110-111.

to build the Islamic state. We do not insist on this or that;...the mere fall of the infidel regime will bring everything within the reach of the Muslims".⁶³⁴ The very notion of *Jihad* promoted the idea of shedding blood. *Jihad* is necessary to establish, in the end, an Islamic state, and eventually an Islamic global society. This would also purify society through Islamisation. Another important motive was to hasten the return of the Messiah, which would happen only if an Islamic state were to be established, and Sadat stood in the way. Therefore, his political ideals combined with the religious goals motivated Islambouli to assassinate the President. However, at the same time Islambouli was affected by personal matters, that is the arrest of his brother prior to the military parade. He was infected with the desire for revenge.

With regard to Amir, the political dimension was totally vested in the Peace Process. The notion of giving away land for peace was totally against religious doctrine as this included giving away biblical land promised to them by God. The victory in the 1967 war, and the conquering of land, marked the process of redemption and it was only a matter of time before the Messiah would come. Thus, Israeli messianic views soared after the 1967 victory by reclaiming land belonging to Eretz Israel.⁶³⁵ Rabbi Meir Kahane cited the Six Day War as proof that God wanted to speed up the redemption process.⁶³⁶ But with the Peace Process this process of redemption would be stopped. Rabin was preventing this and had to be removed. Amir also wanted the state to be established according to the Halakha, the Jewish law. Rabin's death was a significant result of the Peace Process. The Six Day War provided evidence to

⁶³⁴Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, *op.cit.* p204

⁶³⁵Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold war? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. *op.cit.* p65

⁶³⁶Sprinzak, *Mimetic* *op.cit.* p53

illustrate that God wanted to restore Eretz Israel. With the Peace Process, it seemed that Eretz Israel was going to be destroyed. It involved conceding biblical land, which was against Jewish religion, and the land was meant to be a part of Israel. Thus, any man who stood in the way of Israeli control over biblical land was a traitor, and had to die. Amir saw the Peace Process as not an attempt to establish peace but rather a means to start war. He must have thought of the Peace Process as something that might lead to another holocaust. Rabbi Meir Kahane was responsible for influencing people with such violent feelings. He always preached that "Arabs were dogs, as people who multiply like fleas who must be expelled from Israel or eliminated".⁶³⁷ Arabs were in the wrong place at the wrong time and it was necessary to get rid of them. Rabin was planning to give land to them. The process of redemption that had started with the victory in the Six Day War was now going to be prevented. It becomes evident that Amir was greatly motivated by the ideologies of rabbis, which effected his consequent action. Kahane also claimed he did not hate the Arabs, rather the problem "was not that they were Arabs but that they were non Jewish living in a place designated by God for the Jewish people from biblical times".⁶³⁸ The Palestinian violence is viewed by Kahane as a further means of humiliating the Jews. This hatred for non-Jews was responsible for the use of violence. Amir felt it was his duty to assassinate Rabin, as ordered by God. Amir also was motivated by the *Torah* and the *Halakha* which prophesies that the *Torah* provides the sacred legitimacy to the ideology and violent means advocated by fundamentalist leaders. Thus, "the holiness of Eretz Israel [Land of Israel] is held above

⁶³⁷Hoffman, *op.cit* p101.

⁶³⁸Juergensmeyer Mark, *op.cit.* p66.

every other value, especially that of democracy, which is seen as a Westerner 'Hellenistic' import".⁶³⁹ Motives have a strong connection with ideology and here again it is the ideological teachings that influenced the assassin to assassinate the leader. Amir was totally against establishing any sort of peace especially if it involved giving away land. He was greatly motivated by the ideologies preached by ideologues like Kahane and Kook. Kahane repeatedly expressed his disregard for the Arabs and stressed that the biblical land was given by God and it was theirs. Now Rabin was giving a part of their heritage to their greatest enemy, the Arabs. Furthermore, this would prevent the coming of the Messiah. This had to be stopped and it inevitably involved the assassination of Rabin.

As mentioned before the Tamil Tigers did not have a strong religious ideology. The main reason for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was that he was the most important target. In summation, political events are inherently against religious doctrine. At the same time both fundamentalist groups tried to gain political legitimacy by participating in elections, as they knew that ideological expectations could not be fulfilled without political legitimacy. Religious texts provided the ideologies with justification. The ideologies are imparted by religious leaders, which increases their importance. Again the motive behind Gandhi's assassination was political as it included stopping Indian influence in Sri Lanka and revenge for Gandhi's policies.

Aims

⁶³⁹Yigal Amir: inside the mind of a killer, U.S. News and World Report, 20/11/1995.

The ideology behind the assassinations possessed some explicit aims. Their aims were definitely tainted with political and religious factors as for the Muslim fundamentalists, and Islambouli, the establishment of a global state of religious (Islamic) harmony is the ultimate desire. However, Muslims realise that the establishment of a global Islamic state is overly - ambitious and they tend to concentrate on Islamisation at a national level as a primary goal. This required a strict adherence to Islamic law, which Sadat was not following. In other words, "while the general trend of returning to Islam aims to correct society in a step by step fashion and to instil the values of the religion as away of life, the extremist Islamic organisations have turned the phenomenon into a lever to fulfil political aims - whether through democratic process in order to gain power by legal means, or through terrorism and other illegal means".⁶⁴⁰

The attempt has been to purify society, that is to get rid of the state of *Jahiliyya* which prevents the fulfilment of the goal. This could only be established if groups like the Muslim Brotherhood acquired political legitimacy. This meant that only if political legitimacy was acquired could religious ideology then be fulfilled. Thus, there is a well established connection between politics and religion which is needed in order to create Islamic state, and in the long run establish a Islamic global society. However, Sadat stood in the way of this, as on a number of occasions he arrested Muslim fundamentalists. For example, just prior to his assassination he arrested 1500 fundamentalists, thereby trying to diminish their political image. Sadat was the obstacle in fulfilling these goals. He was not a pious Muslim which is a requirement to head a Islamic state. Therefore, in order to

⁶⁴⁰The Threat of Islamic Fundamentalism. Background Material. [gopher://www.israel-info.gov.il](http://www.israel-info.gov.il) p2.

achieve their aims it was necessary to assassinate Sadat. Thus in simple words, Islambouli was trying to break away from *Jahiliyya* and the Amir was trying to get back on the path to redemption.

Amir and Jewish fundamentalists wanted a state governed by the Halakha. They did not see Rabin as establishing Jewish state. The most important aim governing the assassination of Rabin was to stop the Peace Process as it entailed the conceding of land given to them by God. Therefore, an important point was to prevent the Arabs from gaining land which was not rightfully theirs. Even God apparently did not want this and commanded Amir to assassinate Rabin. Furthermore, Amir believes in a messianic component, that is he believes in the coming of the Messiah. The 1967 war was a signal that the process of redemption has begun. This desire to bring about the Messiah's coming is an important aim for most Jews. For example, this can be seen when plans were made to destroy the Mosque on the Mount in order to build the third temple, which will hasten the way for the Messiah to come. Rabin with his Peace initiative seemed to be preventing this, and with his death, maybe the Messiah would not be prevented. Rajiv Gandhi's assassination had very practical aims. The LTTE deemed it necessary to assassinate him for practical reasons. Their main aim was the ending of any further Indian involvement in Sri Lankan affairs. Another important aim for the LTTE was revenge. They wanted to punish Gandhi for the change of his policies. Thus these purposes would be fulfilled with the assassination.

In conclusion thesis has illustrated the complicated nature of the study of political assassination. In setting out the main objectives of the thesis, the introduction examined the long history of political assassination and sought to

offer some way of interpreting the definitional debates that have affected the study of political assassination, along with other related areas, such as terrorism. Since there is an inclination to equate political assassinations with terrorism this thesis has attempted briefly to examine and understand the phenomenon of terrorism as well, in order to more clearly delineate the differences between the two. Furthermore, the discussion on the definitions of political assassinations involved analysing several classifications of political assassinations in order to gain a better understanding of the concept. The thesis identified and elaborated one particular classification and then used it as the best classification. However, the classification required some modification in the light of the cases examined. Finally, the introduction laid out the structure of the thesis and stated the three main questions that were to be analysed in the thesis. These were:

- Can the assassinations analysed in the thesis be categorised as political assassinations?
- Can the justifications that are analysed justify the political assassinations in this thesis?
- Are political assassinations ever successful as a political strategy or are they only successful as existential acts?

Chapter Two then moved on to normative questions, examining normative justifications given for political assassinations. The chapter concentrated on three particular justifications that are offered. The first is instrumental justification. This analyses the consequentialist approach. The second justification is non-utilitarian justification. In this section, moral justifications

are sought across many traditions such as the Christian, Indian and Chinese traditions. Finally, what this thesis calls 'terroristic' justification was examined, through the writings of various largely religious thinkers ranging from Sayyid Qutb to Rabbi Meir Kahane. A second hypothesis was advanced here, to the effect that all such justifications fail and that the only possible justification amounts to an existential wager on consequences, but one which is neither susceptible to the normal criteria of consequentialist judgement nor open to the moralising argument of either Just War or terroristic justifications.

Chapters Three, Four and Five then discussed the case studies which help to test both the explanatory and normative hypotheses. The chapters cover the political assassination of Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Rajiv Gandhi of India. In all the chapters the intention has been to set the background for the assassinations, and to describe the motivations for the assassinations, the actual assassination and finally the consequences of the assassinations. The latter half of the chapter then examined the three questions with regard to each case, and found answers to the questions.

Having analysed the explanatory and normative aspects of the cases Chapter Six examined what the state of political assassinations are for the contemporary world. It analysed the legal aspects surrounding political assassinations and what the future may bring if this phenomenon is not studied properly.

The thesis clearly identified the definitional problems that exist in defining terrorism, tyrannicide and political assassinations. There is a close link between them, but they each are a distinct act of political violence. Furthermore, there are pros and cons to every definition and it is hard to pin

point any particular definition as being the right definition. Regarding political assassinations the thesis found that it is a killing can be categorised as a political assassination if it involves the three specific elements of a prominent political figure, a political motive and a potential political impact of the death. This has been proposed by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty and seems to identify the particularly important aspects of political assassination. Additionally, the thesis found a classification for political assassination that was also produced by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty. Each case study was analysed through the classification, and it illustrated again that the three elements are an essential part of a political assassination.

This thesis concluded that it is hard to strictly classify an assassination as falling into any one particular category. The thesis argues that for any assassinations to be classified as political assassination, it should definitely contain all the aspects of an elite substitution. This is because elite substitution when altered contains the three important elements needed for a political assassination. That is, the assassin will target a particular political figure because of specific political motives and the assassination will lead to certain political consequences. This was the case in all the political assassinations discussed above. The other types mentioned by Kirkham, Levy and Crotty in definitions provided may, or may not, be partly political assassination. For example, the assassin in each of the assassinations saw the victim as a tyrant due to the policies they were pursuing, and their assassinations would hopefully end these policies, or maybe to a lesser degree the assassination would at least draw attention to the assassin's cause.

Thus, with special reference to the assassinations examined in this thesis, it seems to me that all three assassinations are perfect examples of political assassination. As explained before, a political assassination must have three essential components which are that the target should be a prominent political figure, there must be a political motive for the assassination and there should be a potential political impact of the assassination. In each of the cases mentioned above, all these essential components existed. All three were prominent political figures. Thus these assassinations can be regarded as political assassinations.

In conclusion, according to consequentialist/utilitarianist debate, all three political assassinations could not be justified. What is interesting is that the conclusion reached was only possible as these were political assassinations that did take place and was able to examine the events leading to the assassination and the consequences of the assassinations. Therefore, it was easy to arrive at the conclusions. The implications of this is that it is possible to find out whether assassination is justified, or not, only when the entire event is completed. With regard to the political assassinations of Adolf Hitler or maybe President Robert Mugabe, according to a consequentialist argument it could be argued that it is justifiable to assassinate them. This decision would be based on analysing the current situations in the respective countries which might suggest that assassinating such persons would improve conditions in the countries and for their people. This is a complex consequentialist argument. However, according to utilitarianism, the political assassinations cannot be justified, as there is no way of telling whether the consequences of the political assassinations would mean greater utility for the

countries and their people. Thus, although strictly speaking according to the arguments of consequentialist political assassinations cannot be justified, however, in principle under complex consequentialist argument it cannot be ruled out.

According to Just War percepts the three assassinations were not justified. All three assassinations did not fulfil the requirements of Just War and, therefore, the political assassinations cannot be justified. When it comes to a political assassination it seems unlikely that all six requirements of Just War could be fulfilled.

Just War specifically has certain requirements for violence to be morally justified. In other traditions like those of India and China, it is apparent from the previous chapter that moral justifications for violence also exist but the context of justifications is that of a king and his kingdom. On the whole, the impression is that use of force can be morally justified when it is used for self-protection. In both the cases it is evident that the use of force in order to protect the King and his Kingdom was therefore justified. There is extensive detail in both the 'Arthashastra' and 'The Art of War' about what methods of violence can be used in order to protect the King and his society. This morally justifies the use of force.

Most assassins want their action to be legitimised. This mostly reflects on their personal insecurities. They want to know that others will support their action and therefore the groups that assassins belong to become very integral to their commitment. As Yehuda states "the group provides the individual with moral support, motive, justification, material means, ideology,

and often physical refuge as well".⁶⁴¹ It seems that terroristic justifications do not justify political assassinations. There are always going to be resentments regarding countries policies. This does not provide the opportunity for unhappy people to assassinate whoever they feel is responsible for their actions. Furthermore, as seen from the discussion in an earlier chapter, there are instances such as the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi when an assassination does not have any religious justification for carrying out such an act. Thus, terroristic justification cannot justify political assassination; it however does justify such an act to the perpetrator.

Thus, although none of the assassinations succeeded in the utilitarian and non - utilitarian defences all three cases of political assassination examined in this thesis succeeded as existential acts. The three assassins Islambouli, Amir and Subha fully understand the true meaning of the word assassin. All the assassins were very sure in their minds what their course of action was going to be. The assassins were also aware that it was inevitable that their actions would either mean death while carrying out the act, or once they were arrested. This however did not distract them from their mission. So far as the targets of the assassination are concerned, Islambouli and Amir were clear about who they wanted to assassinate and therefore planned and trained with this specific purpose in mind. Subha, on the other hand, was trained in the art of being an assassin but her target was unknown to her till the last minute. Despite these differences between the assassins they were individually very committed to their jobs. The assassins were free moral agents who knew the task that they were undertaking and claimed

⁶⁴¹ Yehuda, One More.. p71.

responsibility for their actions. Therefore, all these factors definitely prove the point that political assassinations do succeed as existential acts.

Finally, after having analysed the explanatory and normative aspects of political assassination, analysing the policy illustrated that the assassinations of political leaders in the contemporary world is an important thing which needs to be understood and dealt with. The brief examination of policy does show that the laws are not perfect and that it is possible to violate them easily. If anything, the laws need to be strengthened in order to create a stable international order. This would require coherent and strict laws to be formulated with clear definitional explanations. This would help reduce the confusion that exists with respect to what the laws really mean and to whom they apply. Also, the laws need to make a clear distinction between heads of states, and individuals who pose a threat to the international system. That is, whether the laws are targeted towards state actors or non - state actors. Also, one needs to address issues such as assassinations in peace times and times of war. Furthermore, it is also important to make sure that countries such as the United States do not violate laws. Since they are the hegemon in the contemporary world it is their responsibility to be a model for the world by obeying laws and contributing to stability between states.

In conclusion, there is an important need to understand this phenomenon of political assassination if there is to be an effort to counter political assassinations. This issue opens the door for further questions in the field. What does the current status of political assassination mean for the future of international law? Will its current status mean that in the future the

international community will witness more political assassinations? Is this a step towards an era of targeted killing?

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